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WEIRD

JUNE, 1971
50¢

FEATURING:
NEW DEPTHS OF TERROR WITH

THE BEAST FROM BELOW

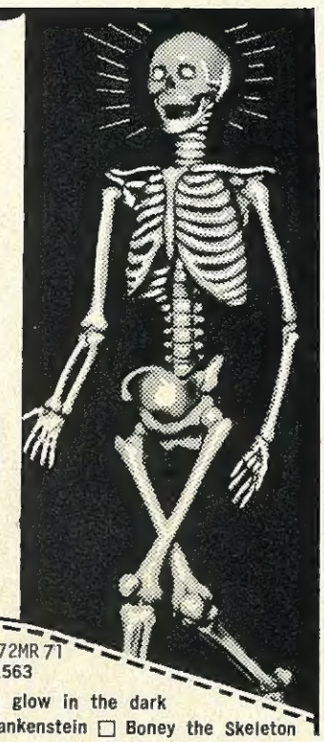
•

THE WORLD WAS THEIR GRAVEYARD

THE EVIL ONES

PLUS OTHER SHOCKING TALES OF HORROR

MONSTER S-I-Z-E MONSTERS



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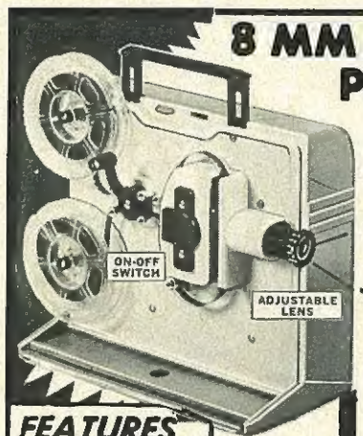

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WEIRD

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CARL BURGOS, Editor IRVING FASS, Art Director
EZRA JACKSON, Art Editor

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Single-copy price: 50¢. Application to mail at second-class rates is pending at New York, N.Y. Printed in U.S.A.

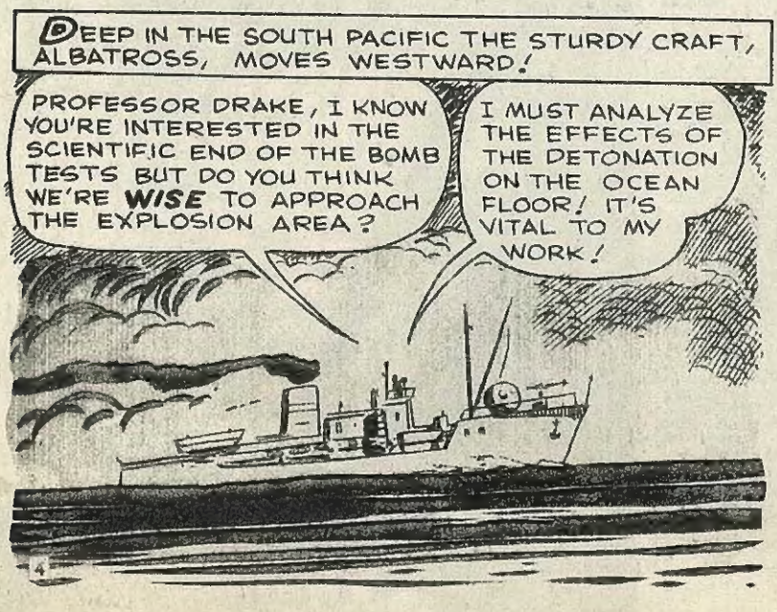
THE BEAST FROM BELOW

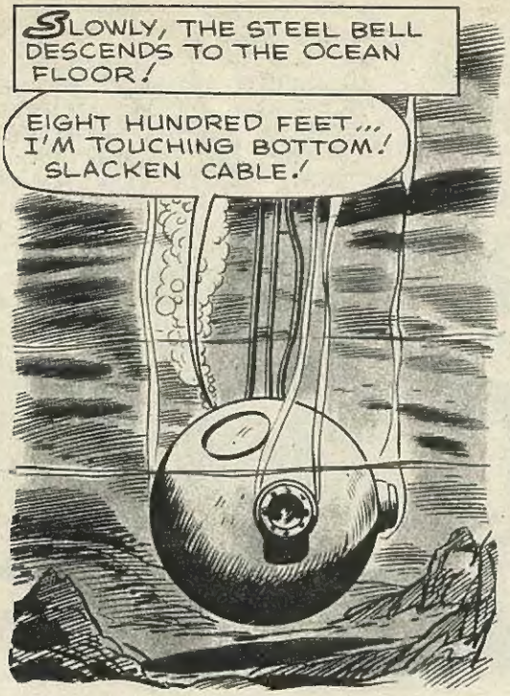
G-GOOD GRIEF! THE MONSTER...

IT'S AFTER US! WE'LL NEVER ESCAPE!

FIRE THAT HARPOON BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

THE EXPLOSION OF THE MOST POWERFUL BOMB KNOWN TO MAN HAD SHAKEN THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA RELEASING A CREATURE THAT TIME HAD FORGOTTEN! ONE MAN WITNESSED THIS INCREDIBLE OCCURENCE... YET NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE HIM!




SLOWLY, THE STEEL BELL DESCENDS TO THE OCEAN FLOOR!
EIGHT HUNDRED FEET... I'M TOUCHING BOTTOM! SLACKEN CABLE!

MEANWHILE, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PREPARE TO "SHOOT" THEIR H-BOMB TEST!
THE GREATEST ATOMIC FORCE WE'VE UNLEASHED YET!
EIGHT SECONDS... SEVEN SECONDS... SIX ... FIVE ...

AND SEEN ONLY BY THE CAMERA'S EYE IS THE TINY ATOLL THAT WILL SOON BE BATHED IN A NUCLEAR INFERNO!
... FOUR ...
... THREE ...
... TWO ...
... ONE ...

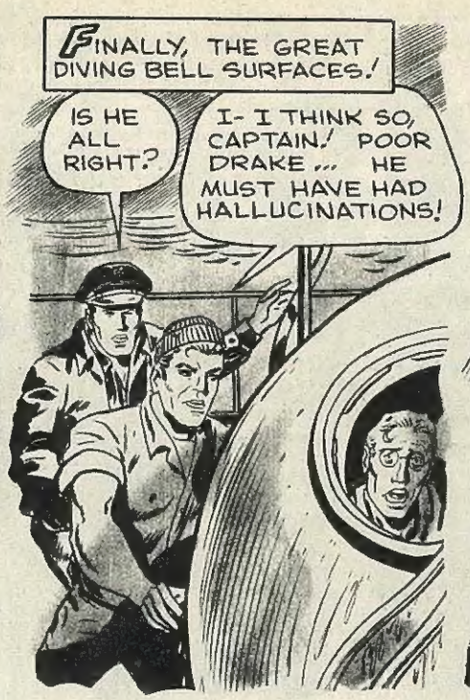
THEN, A SPLIT SECOND LATER AS PROFESSOR DRAKE PEERS INTENTLY FROM THE PORT OF HIS STEEL BELL ...
THE BOMB'S BEEN DETONATED! G-GREAT HEAVENS!

THUNDERATION! THE OCEAN FLOOR IS ACTUALLY SHIFTING, MOVING! I-I BELIEVE AN UNDERWATER FISSURE IS OPENING UP!

ABRUPTLY, PROFESSOR DRAKE'S EXPRESSION CHANGES FROM ONE OF INTEREST TO ONE OF SHOCKED DISBELIEF AS...
A CRACK HAS OPENED! WHA...? GOOD HEAVENS! A-A BEAST! SOME SORT OF MONSTER COMING OUT FROM UNDER THE OCEAN FLOOR!

I-IT'S FANTASTIC! THE CREATURE IS FIFTY... SIXTY FEET LONG... I-IT SEEMS TO BE A-A LAND ANIMAL... YET IT APPEARS TO BE BREATHING IN THE WATER! IT'S COMING TOWARD ME ... CARTER!
PROFESSOR! WE'RE BRINGING YOU UP! TRY TO CONTROL YOURSELF, SIR!

NO! NO! I WANT TO OBSERVE THE CREATURE! IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE DON'T BRING ME UP! DON'T!
PROFESSOR... WE'RE TRYING TO HELP YOU!


FINALLY, THE GREAT DIVING BELL SURFACES!
IS HE ALL RIGHT?
I- I THINK SO, CAPTAIN! POOR DRAKE... HE MUST HAVE HAD HALLUCINATIONS!

PROFESSOR! YOU HAD US WORRIED WITH ALL THAT CRAZY TALK!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE... MUFFED THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY OF ALL TIME! A HUGE BEAST NOW PROWLS THE OCEAN FLOOR! I TELL YOU IT'S FANTASTIC!

PROFESSOR, YOU DON'T ACTUALLY EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT STORY!
IT'S THE TRUTH! I MUST MAKE ANOTHER DESCENT IMMEDIATELY! PERHAPS IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

THE SHOCK OF THE EXPLOSION SOMEHOW TWISTED HIS MIND!
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE RIGHT, CAPTAIN! HE BELIEVES HE SAW THIS... THIS CREATURE!
OF COURSE I SAW THE BEAST! THIS IS NO TIME TO ARGUE... I MUST GO DOWN AGAIN AT ONCE!

I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T ALLOW THAT, PROFESSOR! BENSON, SMITH! TAKE HIM TO HIS QUARTERS!
NO! YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS, CAPTAIN! I'M NOT LOSING MY MIND! THERE IS A CREATURE! GO DOWN WITH ME... I'LL PROVE IT!

THIS VENTURE WAS MADNESS, CAPTAIN! WE TOYED WITH DANGEROUS ELEMENTS! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE PROFESSOR!
PERHAPS TIME WILL CURE HIS SICKENED MIND, CARTER!
RELEASE ME! I DEMAND IT! THE GREATEST DISCOVERY THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN IS DOWN THERE!

THAT EVENING, THE ALBATROSS KNIFES ITS WAY THROUGH A BITTER STORM HOMEWARD BOUND!
YOU, BENSON... YOU BELIEVE MY STORY! YOU MUST!
SURE! SURE, PROFESSOR! NOW WHY DON'T YOU CATCH SOME SHUT EYE?
HEY, BENSON... THAT NOISE! WHAT WAS IT?
FUSSSH!

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING, SMITH! YOU'RE JUST JUMPY, THAT'S ALL!
NO... IT SOUNDED LIKE A HUGE WAVE... GREAT SCOTT! L-LOOK!

W-WHAT IN THUNDER... IS... IT?
THE MONSTER! THE PROFESSOR'S MONSTER!

SUDDENLY, THE GREAT BEAST FROM THE DEPTHS FLAILS THE AIR WITH ITS HUGE CLAWS!
LOOK! IT'S REACHING OUT... FOR US!
HELP! HELP!

IT'S GOT US!
YAAAAAA!
G-GOOD GRIEF... I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!

THEN, THE MONSTER SLIPS BACK INTO THE DARK SEA WITH IT'S HUMAN PRIZE...
WE HEARD A CRY FOR HELP! PROFESSOR! WHERE ARE BENSON AND SMITH?
THE MONSTER... IT CAME OUT OF THE SEA AND SEIZED THEM BOTH! NOW PERHAPS YOU'LL BELIEVE MY STORY!

PROFESSOR... PLEASE! THIS IS NO TIME TO START THAT NONSENSE! WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE TWO MEN... WERE THEY WASHED OVERBOARD IN THE STORM?
THAT'S PROBABLY JUST WHAT HAPPENED... AND THE PROFESSOR IMAGINED THIS MONSTER TOOK THEM!

STEADY, I'VE GOT TO CONTROL MYSELF! OF COURSE THEY CAN'T BELIEVE ME! WHO COULD ENVISION SUCH A CREATURE! THEY'LL HAVE ME IN A MADHOUSE UNLESS I'M CAREFUL! YES, I MUST BE PATIENT... AGREE WITH THEM!

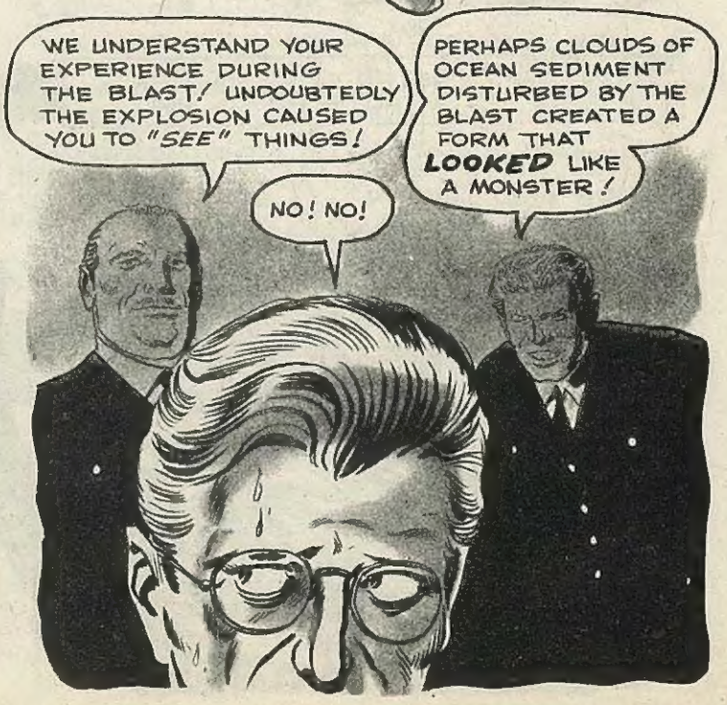
AND SOON AFTER...
I-I'M SORRY! THE H-BOMB EXPLOSION MUST HAVE SHOCKED ME... MADE ME IMAGINE THINGS! I JUST THOUGHT I SAW A MONSTER!
WHEW! THANK HEAVENS, YOU'RE OUT OF IT, PROFESSOR! DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT A THING! WE'RE HEADING BACK FOR SAN FRANCISCO!

TWO WEEKS LATER IN SAN FRANCISCO!
T-THE THIRD VESSEL! G-GREAT GRIEF! M-MYSTERIOUS SINKINGS! WHY THE MONSTER COULD BE RESPONSIBLE!

DESPERATELY, PROFESSOR DRAKE STUDIES THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE SINKINGS!
YES, YES, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! THE FIRST VESSEL SANK OFF THE COAST OF CENTRAL AMERICA, THE SECOND NEAR ACAPULCO, MEXICO AND THE THIRD OFF PORTLAND, OREGON...

THE MONSTER HAS COME EAST AND IS FOLLOWING A DEFINITE COURSE OF DESTRUCTION NORTHWARD! I MUST DO SOMETHING!

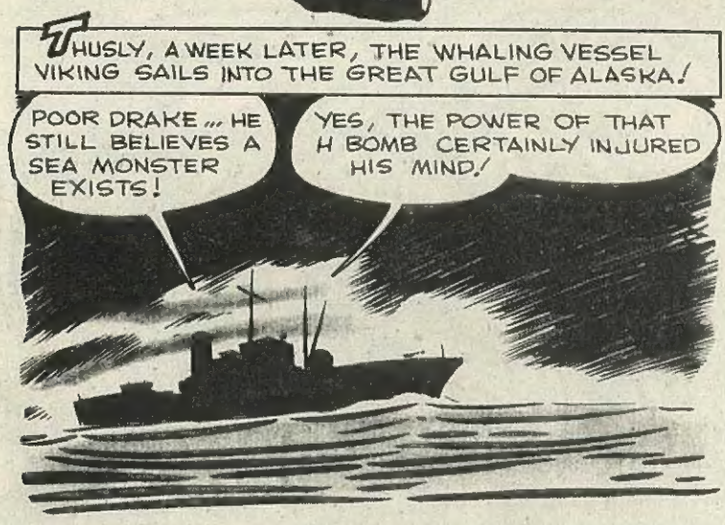
SOON PROFESSOR DRAKE REQUESTS AN AUDIENCE WITH NAVAL OFFICIALS!
I TELL YOU, GENTLEMEN, I HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THOSE SINKINGS WERE CAUSED BY THE MONSTER I SAW ON THE OCEAN FLOOR!
PROFESSOR DRAKE, WE DEEPLY RESPECT YOUR REPUTATION BUT WE CAN HARDLY EXPEND TIME AND MONEY ON A... A MONSTER!


WE UNDERSTAND YOUR EXPERIENCE DURING THE BLAST! UNDOUBTEDLY THE EXPLOSION CAUSED YOU TO "SEE" THINGS!
NO! NO!
PERHAPS CLOUDS OF OCEAN SEDIMENT DISTURBED BY THE BLAST CREATED A FORM THAT LOOKED LIKE A MONSTER!

FOOLS! FOOLS! I TELL YOU A FANTASTIC SEA MONSTER IS ROAMING THE WATERS MURDERING SEAMEN! IF YOU WON'T LISTEN TO ME I'LL GO AFTER HIM MYSELF!

AND LATER, AT THE EXPLORERS CLUB!
ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS THE BEAST MUST BE MAKING HIS WAY NORTH TO THE GREAT ALASKAN CANYON SEEKING OUT THE GREATEST DEPTH HE CAN FIND TO RETURN TO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH FROM WHENCE HE CAME!

NOW THEN I HAVE HIRED A WHALING BOAT AND I WILL PAY ALL EXPENSES! ARE YOU WITH ME IN THIS VENTURE?
PROFESSOR I CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR STORY BUT SUCH A TRIP WILL OFFER GREAT ADVANTAGES FOR OTHER EXPLORATION! I'M WITH YOU!
I'LL GO, PRO-FESSOR!


THUSLY, A WEEK LATER, THE WHALING VESSEL VIKING SAILS INTO THE GREAT GULF OF ALASKA!
POOR DRAKE... HE STILL BELIEVES A SEA MONSTER EXISTS!
YES, THE POWER OF THAT H BOMB CERTAINLY INJURED HIS MIND!

SUDDENLY...
ER, W-WHAT'S THAT?

YIIIIII!
YIIIKE! GREAT SUFFERING GHOSTS!
IT'S HIM! IT'S HIM! IT'S THE SEA MONSTER!

ABRUPTLY, PANIC BREAKS LOOSE ON THE VIKING AS THE MONSTROUS SEA HORROR ATTACKS!
YEOW! IT'S TRYING TO CAPSIZE US!
T-THE HARPOON GUN! I-I'VE GOT TO HIT THE THING'S BRAIN!

STEADY, STEADY! G-GOT TO HIT THE BEAST DIRECTLY THROUGH THE EYE ...

THEN, THE BARBED STEEL SHAFT IS RELEASED AND...
PERFECT! I-I'VE STUNNED THE MONSTER! N-NOW, ONE MORE SHOT MIGHT FINISH HIM!

BUT BEFORE THE PROFESSOR CAN FIRE AGAIN...
LOOK OUT!
G-GREAT SCOTT!

YAAAHH!
AHHHHH!

A LONE SURVIVOR IS PICKED UP IN THE ICY WATERS BY A PASSING VESSEL!
THE MONSTER! THE MONSTER! HE DESTROYED MY BOAT! HE SMASHED US TO BITS! YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! CALL OUT THE NAVY! HURRY!
EASY, POP! YOU MUSTA HIT AN ICEBERG!

AND WHEN THE PROFESSOR IS TAKEN ABOARD...
DID YOU TELL THEM HOW THE MONSTER OF THE DEEP ATTACKED US? THEY MUST HURRY, CAPTAIN!
I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR, I'VE JUST TALKED TO NAVY AUTHORITIES AND THEY'VE ORDERED ME TO PUT YOU IN IRONS UNTIL... YOU CAN GET MEDICAL TREATMENT!

YES, THEY THINK ME MAD, BUT I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE, MONSTER! YES, YOU'RE WAITING... WAITING TO SLAY AGAIN!

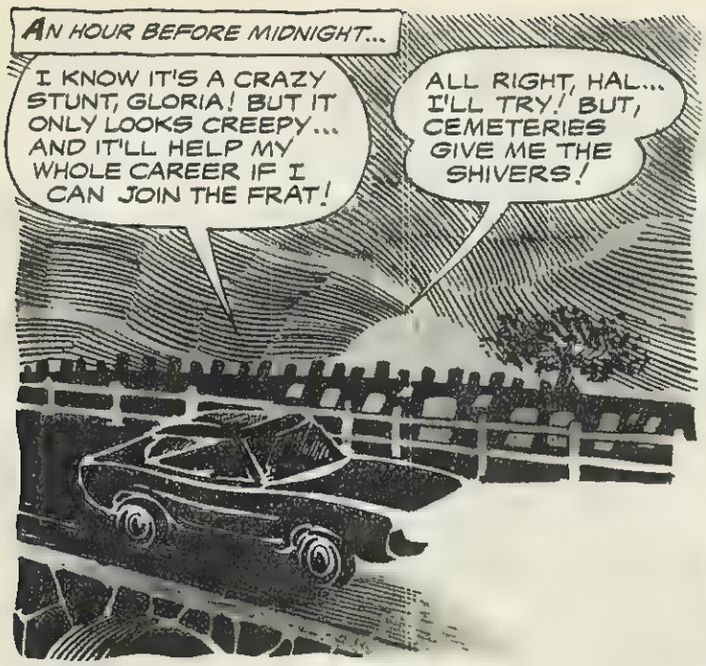
the END

THE SORCERER

WHO KNOWS WHAT STRANGE MYSTERIES ARE HIDDEN BEHIND THE VEIL OF TIME? WHO CAN TELL WHAT THE WORLD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WILL BE LIKE... WHAT WEIRD POWERS WILL BE POSSESSED BY THE MASTERS OF SORCERY, YES, WHO CAN TELL, EXCEPT A MAN-OR GHOST-- FROM THE FUTURE ITSELF?

WHAT A QUEER INSCRIPTION... -HOW COULD A MAN BORN IN THE YEAR 2038 DIE ON JUNE 3, 1970?

K. DALLON
BORN FEB. 9, 2038
DIED JUNE 3, 1970


AN HOUR BEFORE MIDNIGHT...
I KNOW IT'S A CRAZY STUNT, GLORIA! BUT IT ONLY LOOKS CREEPY... AND IT'LL HELP MY WHOLE CAREER IF I CAN JOIN THE FRAT!
ALL RIGHT, HAL... I'LL TRY! BUT, CEMETERIES GIVE ME THE SHIVERS!

HERE, TAKE THIS! THE BRANCH OF A MYRTLE TREE WAS SUPPOSED BY THE ANCIENTS TO WARD OFF HARM FROM SUPERNATURAL CREATURES!
THAT'S PURE NONSENSE, HAL!

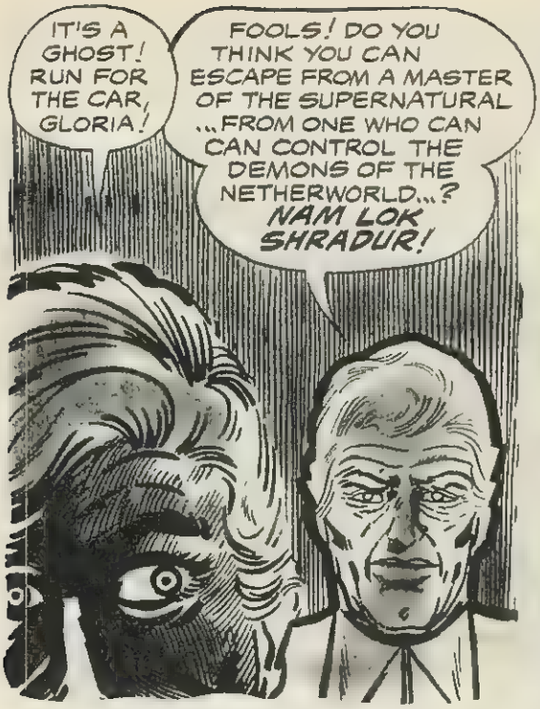
OKAY, I'LL KEEP THE BRANCH MYSELF FOR GOOD LUCK! COME ON, THERE'S THE MAUSOLEUM!

WHAT A STRANGE INSCRIPTION! HOW COULD A MAN BORN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DIE IN 1970?
LISTEN, MIDNIGHT'S STRIKING!
K. DALLON
BONG!

AND THE TWELFTH STROKE FADES...
HAL...! LOOK!
DON'T BE AFRAID, HONEY! IT-IT'S PROBABLY JUST PART OF THE INITIATION!
K.DA
CREEA

NO! IT-- IT'S A GHOST!
THIS IS CARRYING A JOKE TOO FAR! I'LL FIND OUT WHO'S HIDDEN BEHIND THAT CRAZY OUTFIT!

WHAT! HOW COULD--! THE ROCK WENT RIGHT THROUGH HIM! THAT CREATURE IS BODILESS!
HAL
AH

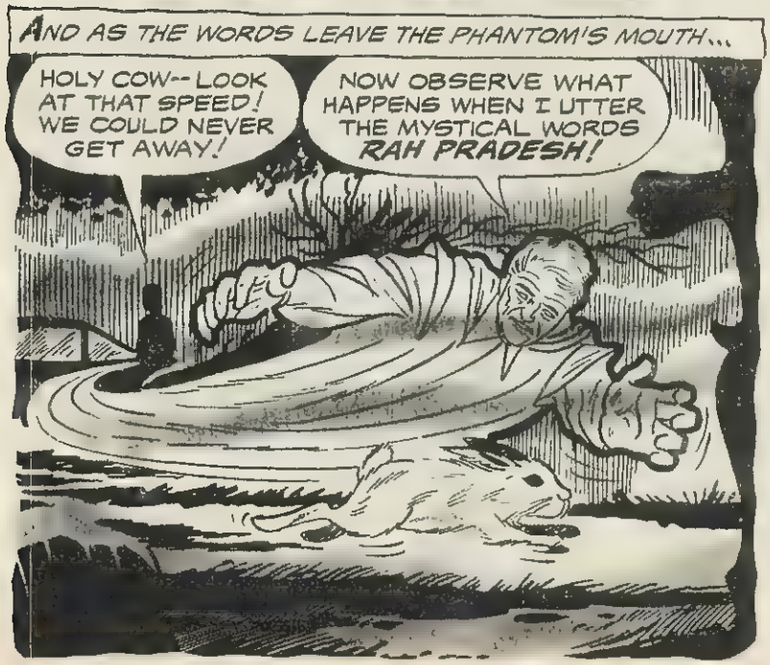

IT'S A GHOST! RUN FOR THE CAR, GLORIA!
FOOLS! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM A MASTER OF THE SUPERNATURAL ...FROM ONE WHO CAN CAN CONTROL THE DEMONS OF THE NETHERWORLD...? NAM LOK SHRADUR!

IN RESPONSE TO THE WEIRD COMMAND, THE MOULDERING GRAVES SPEW FORTH A UNHOLY LEGION...
WE'RE SURROUNDED! I'M GOING TO TRY TO CRASH THROUGH THEM!

THAT CREEP'S COVERING MY WHOLE WINDSHIELD! I-I CAN'T SEE AHEAD!

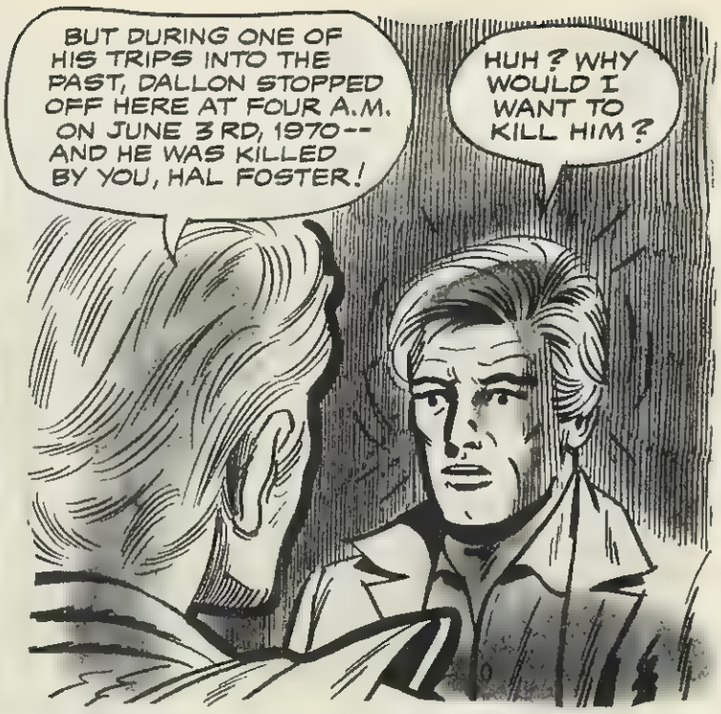
BUT AS HAL GIVES THE CAR THE GUN...
CRASH

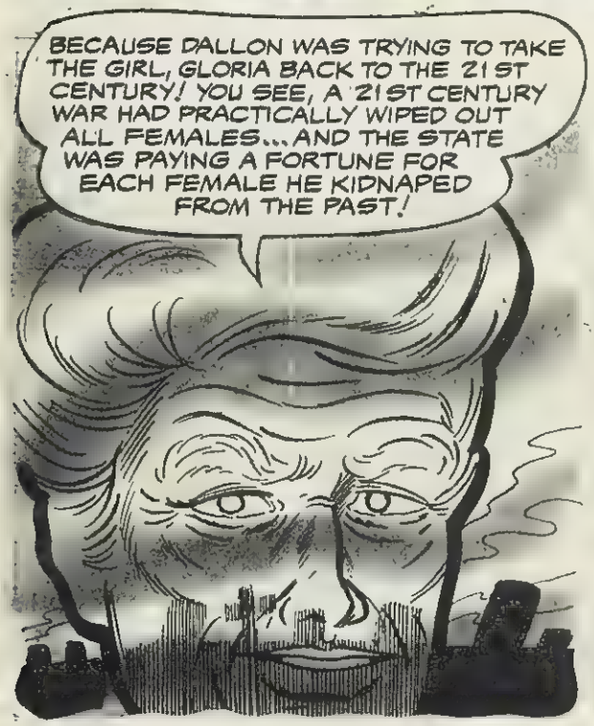
DAZED BUT NOT HURT, HAL MAKES A LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT...
LET-LET'S TRY TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT, HONEY!
I SHALL SHOW YOU HOW USELESS FLIGHT WILL BE! WATCH!


AND AS THE WORDS LEAVE THE PHANTOM'S MOUTH...
HOLY COW--LOOK AT THAT SPEED! WE COULD NEVER GET AWAY!
NOW OBSERVE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I UTTER THE MYSTICAL WORDS RAH PRADESH!

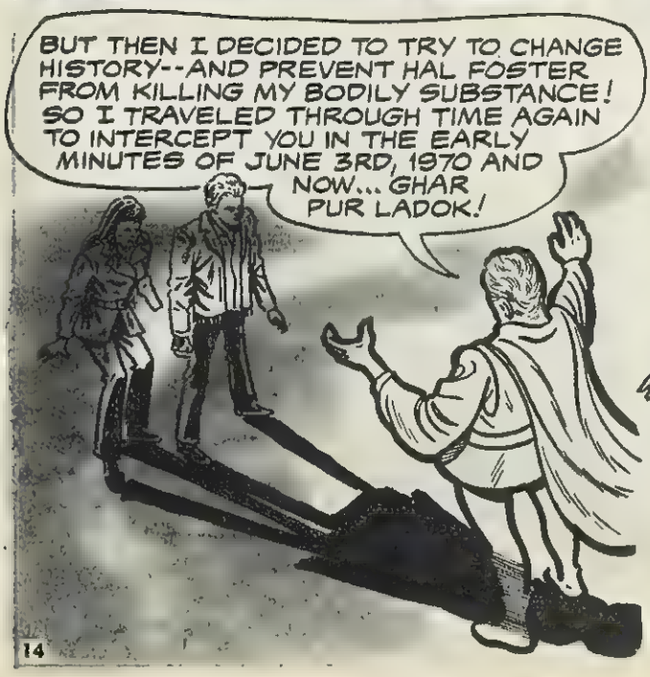
AND WITH THE SAME LIGHTNING-LIKE SPEED...
OH-H! HE TURNED THAT RABBIT INTO A SKELETON!
THAT IS WHAT I WILL DO TO YOU... IF YOU TRY TO DEFY ME!

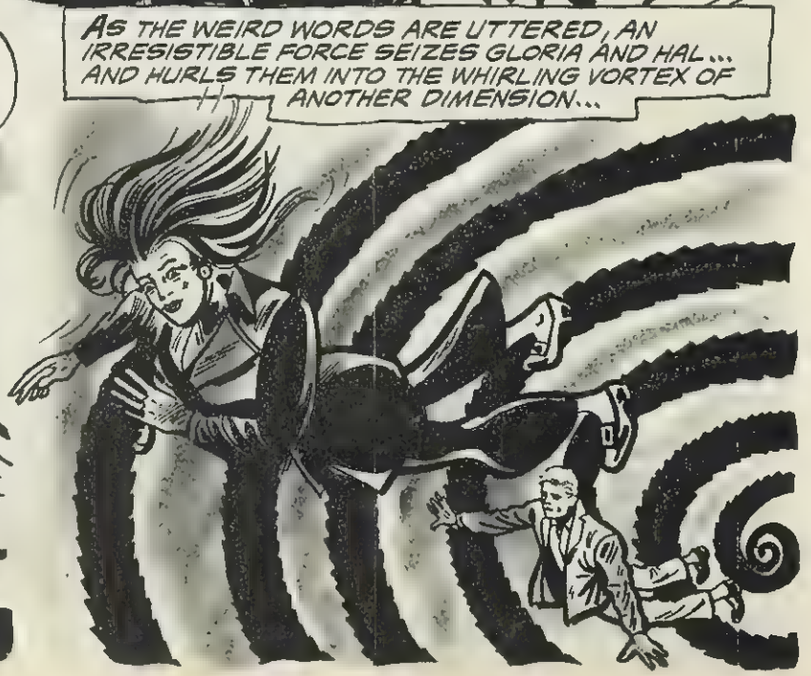
OKAY, YOU WIN! BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME!
I AM THE GHOST OF DALLON, A GREAT SORCERER OF THE 21ST CENTURY! DALLON HAD DISCOVERED THE RITES AND INCANTATIONS FOR TIME TRAVEL!


BUT DURING ONE OF HIS TRIPS INTO THE PAST, DALLON STOPPED OFF HERE AT FOUR A.M. ON JUNE 3RD, 1970-- AND HE WAS KILLED BY YOU, HAL FOSTER!
HUH? WHY WOULD I WANT TO KILL HIM?


BECAUSE DALLON WAS TRYING TO TAKE THE GIRL, GLORIA BACK TO THE 21ST CENTURY! YOU SEE, A 21ST CENTURY WAR HAD PRACTICALLY WIPED OUT ALL FEMALES... AND THE STATE WAS PAYING A FORTUNE FOR EACH FEMALE HE KIDNAPED FROM THE PAST!

YOU MEAN THAT FOUR HOURS FROM NOW, HAL TRIED TO DEFEND ME AND KILLED DALLON!
EXACTLY! AT THE MOMENT OF DALLONS DEATH, I-- HIS SPIRIT-- WAS RELEASED! I WENT BACK TO THE YEAR 1900 TO ORDER THIS MAUSOLEUM BUILT ON THE SPOT WHERE MY BODY DIED!

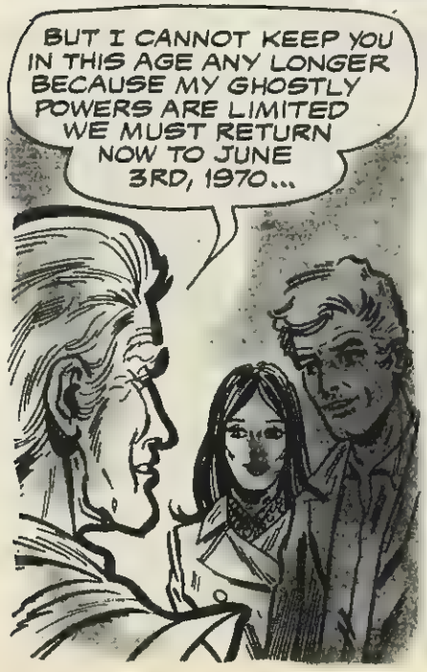

BUT THEN I DECIDED TO TRY TO CHANGE HISTORY--AND PREVENT HAL FOSTER FROM KILLING MY BODILY SUBSTANCE! SO I TRAVELED THROUGH TIME AGAIN TO INTERCEPT YOU IN THE EARLY MINUTES OF JUNE 3RD, 1970 AND NOW... GHAR PUR LADOK!


AS THE WEIRD WORDS ARE UTTERED, AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE SEIZES GLORIA AND HAL... AND HURLS THEM INTO THE WHIRLING VORTEX OF ANOTHER DIMENSION...

SUDDENLY...
WH-WHERE ARE WE?
YOU ARE NOW IN THE WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY!

WHAT A HORRIBLE PLACE! THOSE DEMON-LIKE CREATURES OUTNUMBER THE HUMANS HERE!
ALMOST ALL MEN ARE SORCERERS IN THIS AGE--AND THEY SUMMON UP SUPER-NATURAL CREATURES FOR USE AS SLAVES!

BUT THIS IS WHAT I BROUGHT YOU HERE TO SEE! EVERY WOMAN OF THIS AGE IS A QUEEN AND AN OBJECT OF WORSHIP--BECAUSE THERE ARE SO FEW LEFT!


BUT I CANNOT KEEP YOU IN THIS AGE ANY LONGER BECAUSE MY GHOSTLY POWERS ARE LIMITED WE MUST RETURN NOW TO JUNE 3RD, 1970...

ONCE MORE INTO THE WHIRLING VORTEX OF TIME...

AND SECONDS LATER...
NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN THE WONDERFUL LIFE THAT A WOMAN OF THE 21ST CENTURY LEADS, I AM SURE YOU WILL RESIST DALLON WHEN HE COMES FOR GLORIA AT FOUR A.M.
NO! I-I'D RATHER DIE THAN LIVE IN THAT WORLD WITH ALL THOSE SUPER-NATURAL HORRORS AROUND!

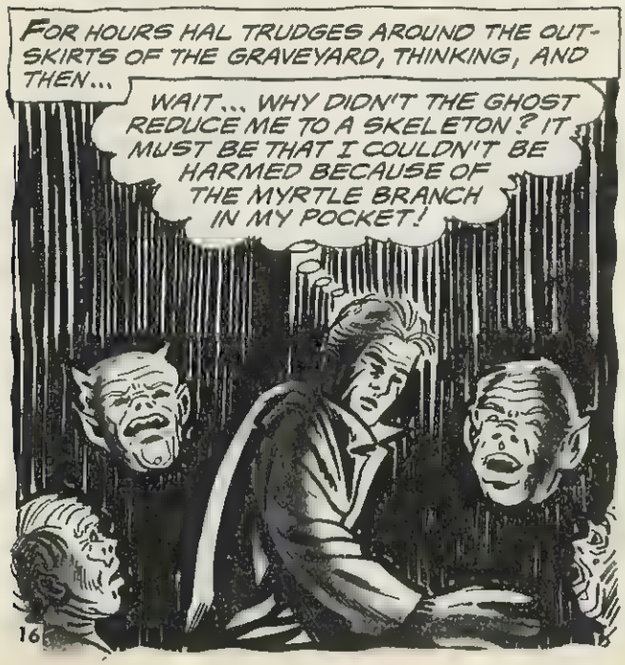
IF DALLON COMES TO TAKE GLORIA AWAY, I SWEAR I'LL KILL HIM!
FOOLS! I TRIED TO PERSUADE YOU NOT TO RESIST! BUT...

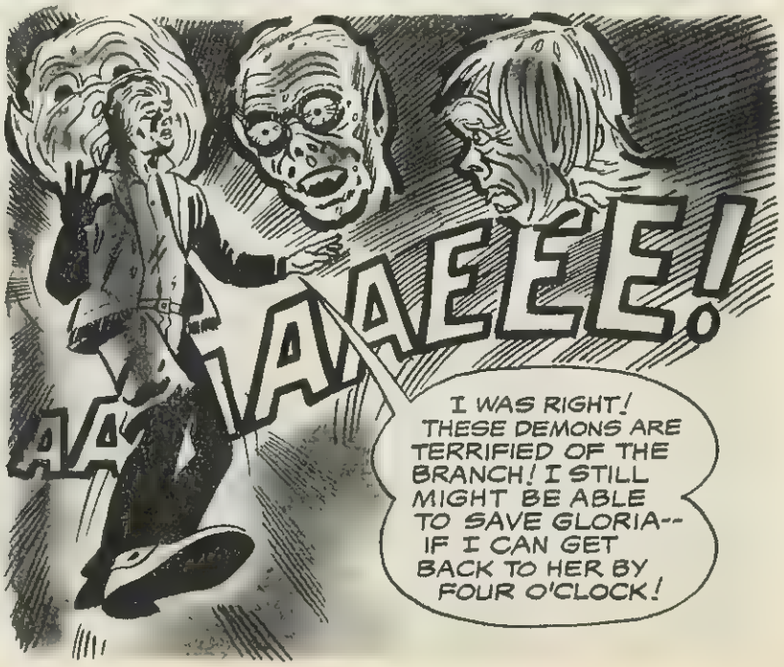
THE PHANTOM FROM THE FUTURE LUNGES WITH BLINDING SPEED, BEFORE HAL CAN EVEN MOVE A MUSCLE...
OHH!

REMEMBER HOW I REDUCED THAT RABBIT TO MERE BONES? WELL, I'LL DO THE SAME THING TO THE GIRL... UNLESS YOU LEAVE THE GRAVEYARD!
DON'T--DON'T DO ANYTHING TO HER! I-I'LL LEAVE!

NO, DON'T LEAVE ME, HAL!
I'VE GOT TO! I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH, GLORIA, TO LET YOU BE KILLED!
GO! I WILL SEND THE DEMONS OF NETHER-WORLD TO ESCORT YOU!

BUT EVEN AS HE WENT, HAL DESPERATELY REFUSED TO GIVE UP HOPE...
I'VE GOT TO THINK OF A WAY OF SAVING GLORIA BEFORE FOUR O'CLOCK...! I'VE GOT TO!

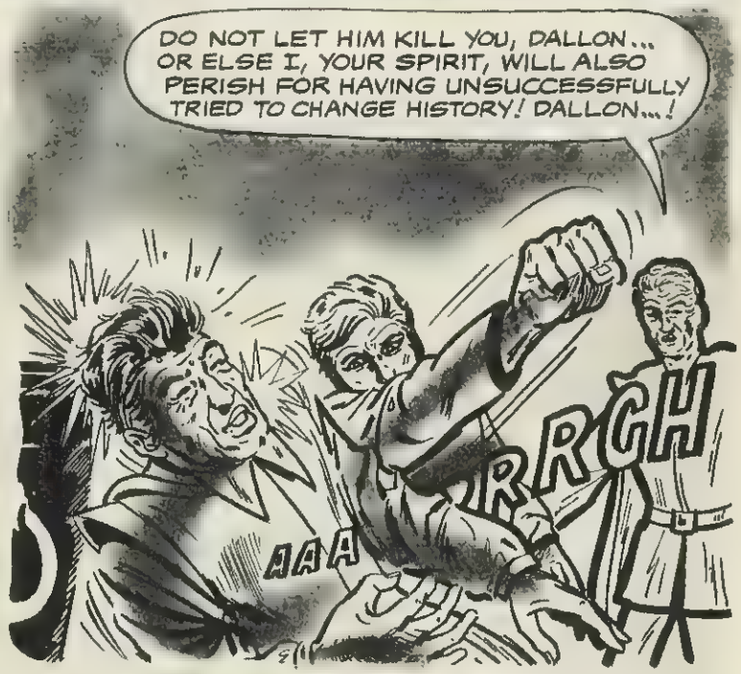

FOR HOURS HAL TRUDGES AROUND THE OUT-SKIRTS OF THE GRAVEYARD, THINKING, AND THEN...
WAIT... WHY DIDN'T THE GHOST REDUCE ME TO A SKELETON? IT MUST BE THAT I COULDN'T BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THE MYRTLE BRANCH IN MY POCKET!


AAAAEEE!
I WAS RIGHT! THESE DEMONS ARE TERRIFIED OF THE BRANCH! I STILL MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE GLORIA-- IF I CAN GET BACK TO HER BY FOUR O'CLOCK!

JUST AS A FAR-OFF STEEPLE BELL TOOLS FOUR O'CLOCK...
AH, A PERFECT FEMALE SPECIMEN... CONVENIENTLY TIED UP FOR THE TRIP TO THE 21ST CENTURY!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S MAKING A TRIP... ONE WAY TO HADES!

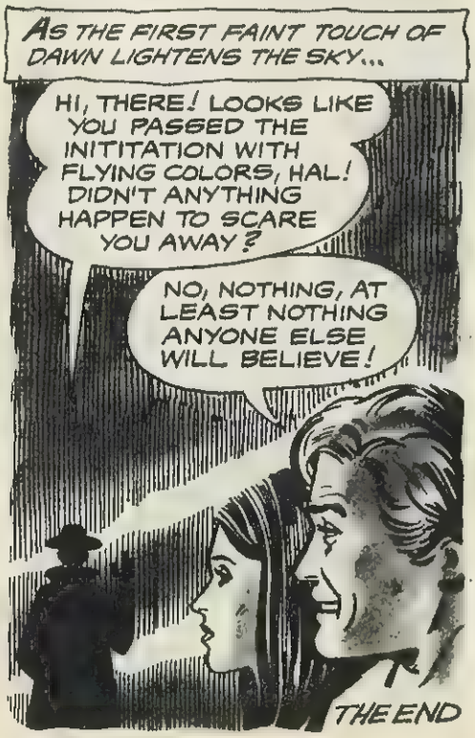
YOU'LL NEVER TAKE GLORIA AWAY... NEVER!
DEMONS OF DARKNESS-- RISE UP AND SLAY THIS INTERLOPER!

HE HAS A MYRTLE BRANCH IN HIS POCKET... YOU MUST SLAY HIM WITH YOUR OWN HANDS, DALLON!


DO NOT LET HIM KILL YOU, DALLON... OR ELSE I, YOUR SPIRIT, WILL ALSO PERISH FOR HAVING UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO CHANGE HISTORY! DALLON...!
AAA
RRGH

BUT AS DALLON'S SKULL CRACKED, WITH HIS DEATH THE DEMONS BEGAN TO VANISH...
HE- HE IS DEAD... AND NOW I AM DESTROYED! AAAEEEE!

IT'S ALL OVER, HONEY... HISTORY COULDN'T BE CHANGED! NOW I'LL UNTIE YOU AND WE'LL WAIT FOR THE BOYS TO SHOW UP!


AS THE FIRST FAINT TOUCH OF DAWN LIGHTENS THE SKY...
HI, THERE! LOOKS LIKE YOU PASSED THE INITITATION WITH FLYING COLORS, HAL! DIDN'T ANYTHING HAPPEN TO SCARE YOU AWAY?
NO, NOTHING, AT LEAST NOTHING ANYONE ELSE WILL BELIEVE!
THE END

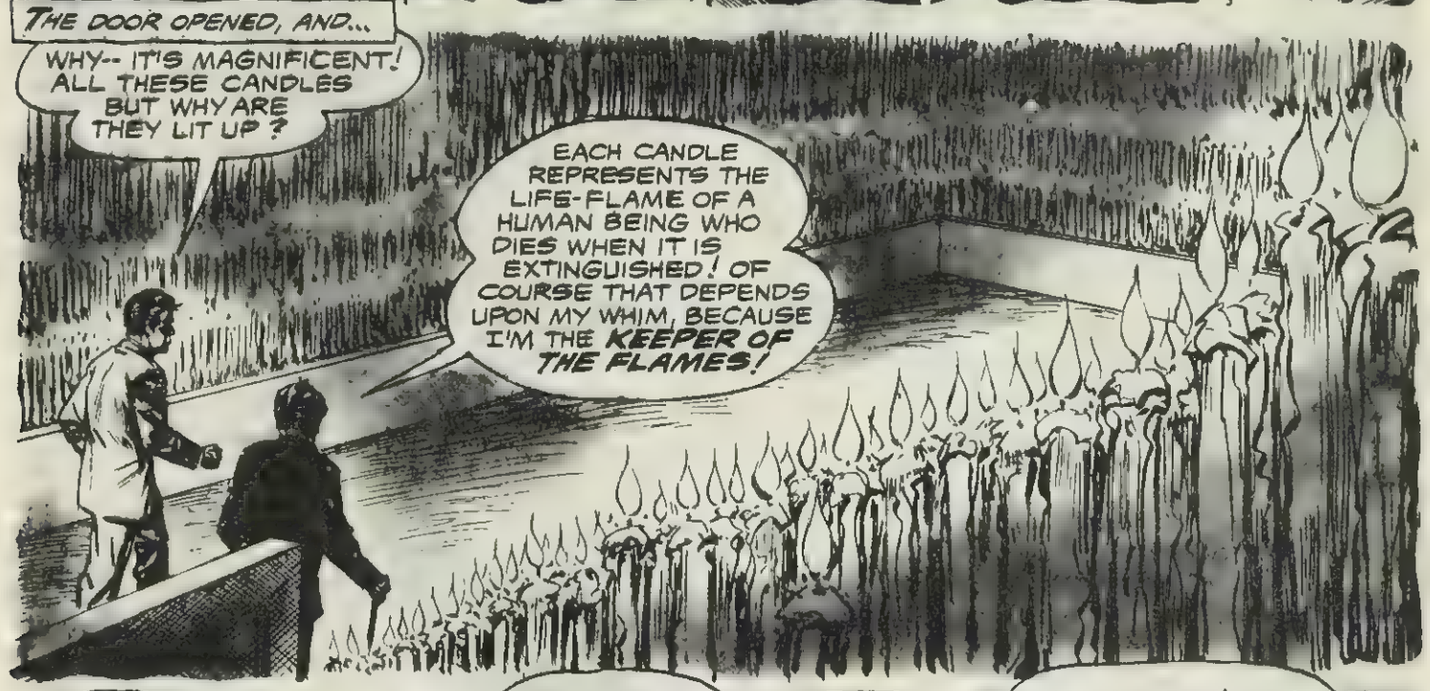
THE EVIL ONES

THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE MAN, JOHN ARNO, WHO MADE A FANTASTIC PACT WITH **DEATH** IN RETURN FOR HAPPINESS! BUT HAPPINESS MEANT **POWER** TO HIM, POWER SO STRONG, SO INFLEXIBLE, SO COMPLETELY IN CONTROL OF OTHER LIVES, THAT ONLY **DEATH** COULD CRUSH ITS TENTACLES IN THE END!

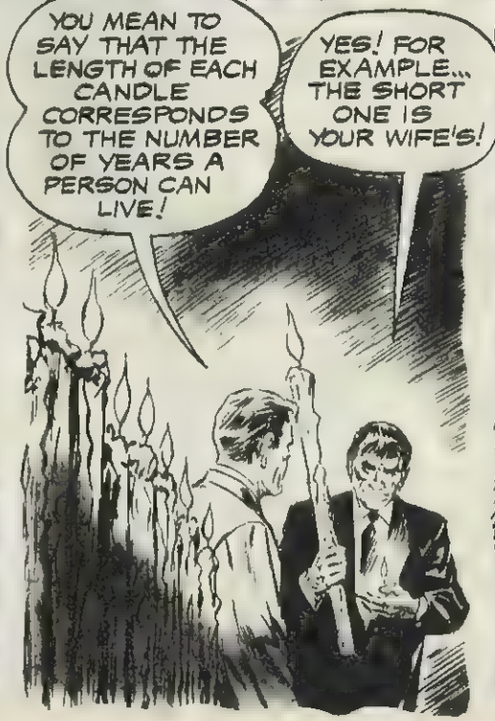
HEH, HEH! DID YOU SAY "ANYTHING"? PARDON MY CURIOSITY, JOHN ARNO, BUT IF YOU REALLY WANT YOUR WIFE BACK, I MAY BE OF SOME SERVICE!
WHA...? WHO ARE YOU?

HEH, HEH! I HAVE... WAYS! COME! IT WON'T TAKE MORE THAN A MOMENT FOR YOU TO HEAR MY PROPOSITION! MY SHOP IS AROUND THE CORNER!
WHAT CAN I LOSE? MAYBE HE CAN HELP ME!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, THEY STOPPED IN FRONT OF A SHOP AT THE END OF A SHABBY STREET...
IS THIS YOUR... UH... SHOP? ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN DO SOMETHING?
YOU'LL SEE!


THE DOOR OPENED, AND...
WHY-- IT'S MAGNIFICENT! ALL THESE CANDLES BUT WHY ARE THEY LIT UP?
EACH CANDLE REPRESENTS THE LIFE-FLAME OF A HUMAN BEING WHO DIES WHEN IT IS EXTINGUISHED! OF COURSE THAT DEPENDS UPON MY WHIM, BECAUSE I'M THE KEEPER OF THE FLAMES!

HEH, HEH! I'M ALSO KNOWN AS— DEATH!
I THOUGHT SO! THE OLD COOT IS CRAZY!


YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT THE LENGTH OF EACH CANDLE CORRESPONDS TO THE NUMBER OF YEARS A PERSON CAN LIVE!
YES! FOR EXAMPLE... THE SHORT ONE IS YOUR WIFE'S!

THAT DOES IT! I WAS A FOOL TO THINK YOU COULD HELP ME!
TURN AROUND AND LOOK AT ME!

A COMPELLING FORCE WHIRLED JOHN ARNO AROUND AND...

IT'S TRUE THEN! YOU ARE DEATH! I WAS WRONG! PLEASE! YOU MUST LET MY WIFE LIVE! I'LL DO ANYTHING! ONLY HELP ME!

OF COURSE, I WILL, ARNO! BUT IN RETURN FOR THIS FAVOR YOU'LL BE MY--AH-- REPRESENTATIVE FOR A PERIOD OF TIME EQUAL TO THE LENGTH I'VE TAKEN FROM YOUR CANDLE!

YES, YES! ANYTHING!

GOOD! I'VE EXTENDED YOUR WIFE'S LIFE SPAN! YOU'LL HAVE POWER, ARNO! THINK OF IT-- PEOPLE WILL BE YOUR SLAVES! THEY'LL FIGHT FOR YOU! YES, THEY'LL EVEN DIE FOR YOU, BECAUSE I'LL BE AT YOUR ELBOW, ALWAYS! HA, HA, HA!

FEEL...SO... FUNNY...

MOMENTS LATER, JOHN ARNO FOUND HIMSELF WANDERING AIMLESSLY ON THE STREET...

OHH, MY HEAD! IT MUST HAVE BEEN THOSE DRINKS! I DREAMT I WAS WITH AN OLD MAN...GOOD HEAVENS! I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT ALICE...MUST GET TO THE HOSPITAL!

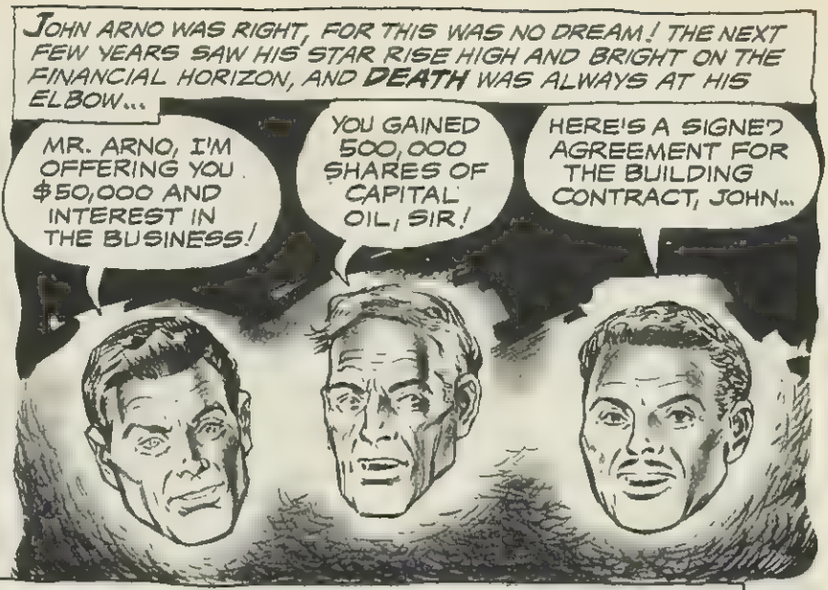
TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! SHE'S GOING TO LIVE! IT'S POSITIVELY AMAZING!

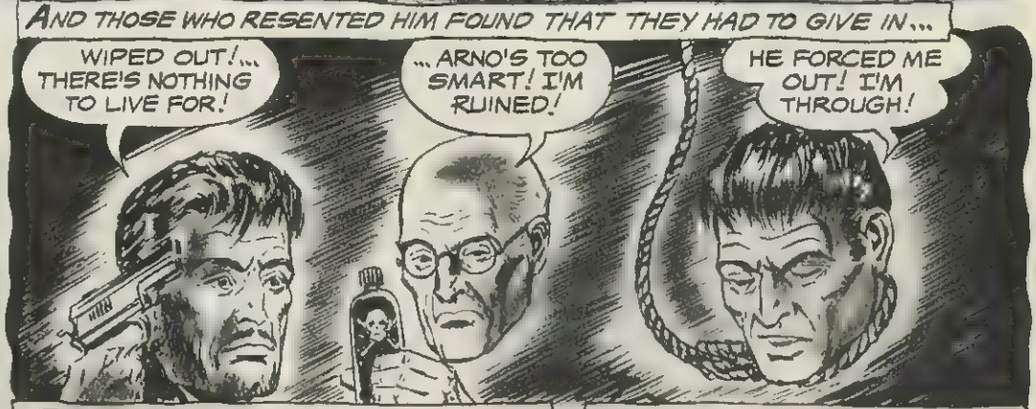
ALICE, DEAREST! YOU-- YOU'RE SITTING UP! YOU'RE WELL!

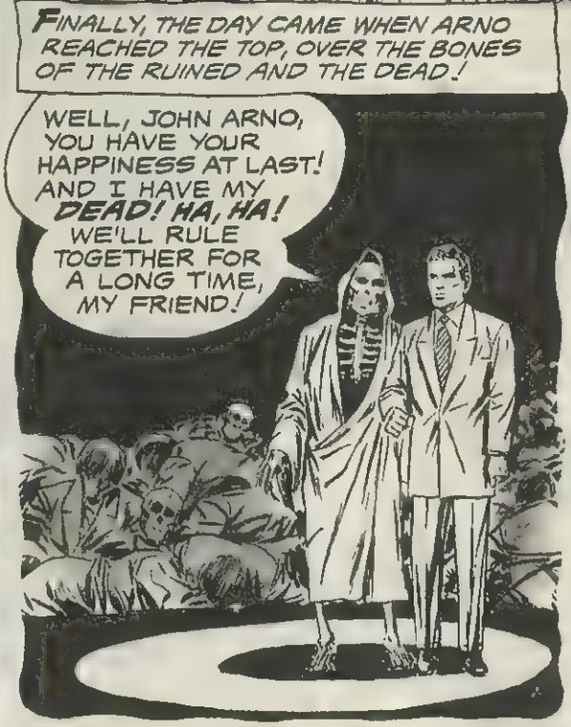
JOHN... OH JOHN!

THE PAIN, IT'S GONE! DARLING! IT'S A MIRACLE!
SO I WASN'T DREAMING AFTER ALL!


JOHN ARNO WAS RIGHT, FOR THIS WAS NO DREAM! THE NEXT FEW YEARS SAW HIS STAR RISE HIGH AND BRIGHT ON THE FINANCIAL HORIZON, AND DEATH WAS ALWAYS AT HIS ELBOW...
MR. ARNO, I'M OFFERING YOU $50,000 AND INTEREST IN THE BUSINESS!
YOU GAINED 500,000 SHARES OF CAPITAL OIL, SIR!
HERE'S A SIGNED AGREEMENT FOR THE BUILDING CONTRACT, JOHN...

PEOPLE EVERYWHERE WERE CAPTURED BY HIS ENTERPRISING GENIUS! THEY FLOCKED TO HIM BY THE THOUSANDS, BEGGING, TO WORK FOR HIM! AND IN THIS WAY, MANY ALSO DIED FOR HIM...
GOOD HEAVENS, MR. ARNO! THAT PLATFORM YOU DESIGNED IS GIVING WAY!


AND THOSE WHO RESENTED HIM FOUND THAT THEY HAD TO GIVE IN...
WIPED OUT!... THERE'S NOTHING TO LIVE FOR!
... ARNO'S TOO SMART! I'M RUINED!
HE FORCED ME OUT! I'M THROUGH!

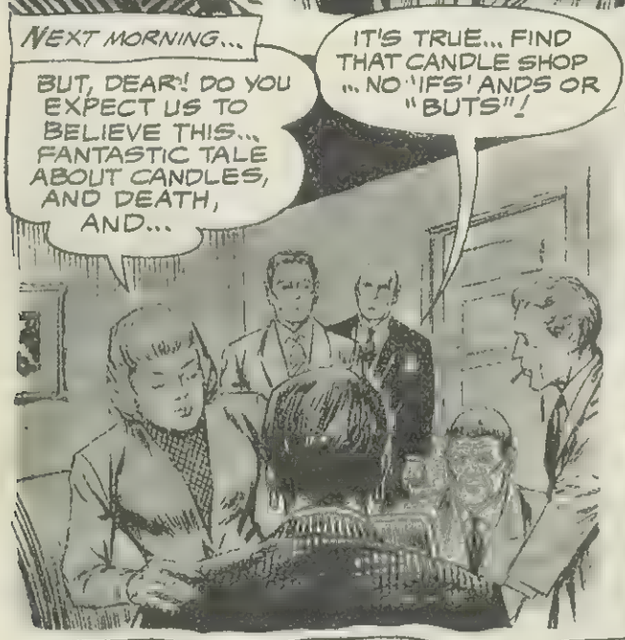

FINALLY, THE DAY CAME WHEN ARNO REACHED THE TOP, OVER THE BONES OF THE RUINED AND THE DEAD!
WELL, JOHN ARNO, YOU HAVE YOUR HAPPINESS AT LAST! AND I HAVE MY DEAD! HA, HA! WE'LL RULE TOGETHER FOR A LONG TIME, MY FRIEND!

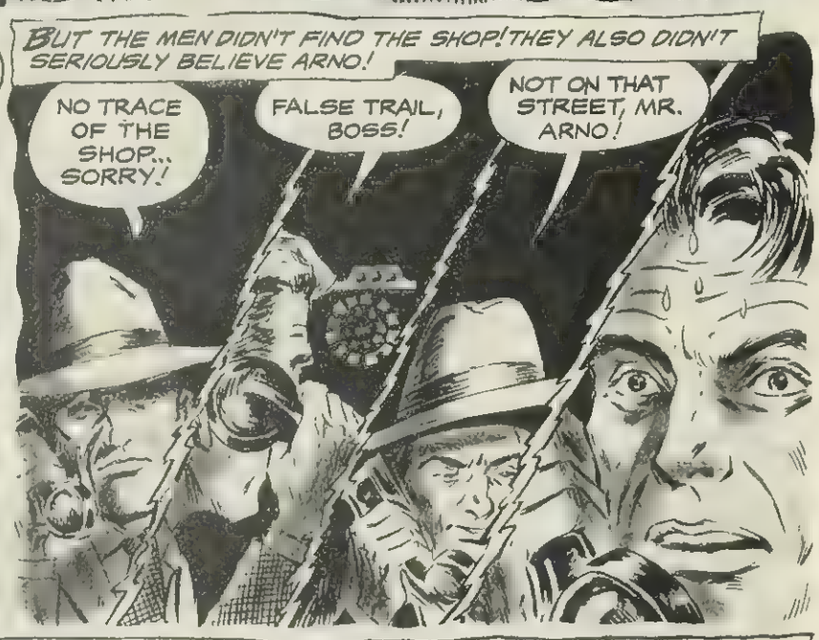
TEN YEARS PASSED, AND ARNO BECAME A LEGENDARY FIGURE! HE RETIRED AT 45, ARROGANT, WITH WEALTH AND INFLUENCE! BUT ONE NIGHT, AS HE SAT ALONE...
GOOD EVENING ARNO!
WHA... OH I- I DIDN'T SEE YOU! WHAT DO YOU WANT?

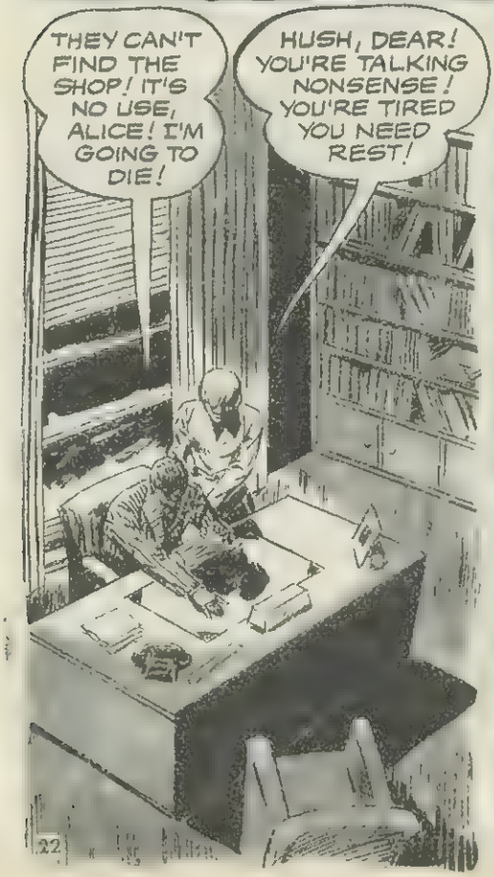
YOUR CANDLE BURNS LOW! I SHALL CALL FOR YOU AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, NEW YEAR'S EVE!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? YOU CAN'T MEAN... PLEASE! LET ME LIVE I'LL PLAN NEW SCHEMES FOR YOU!

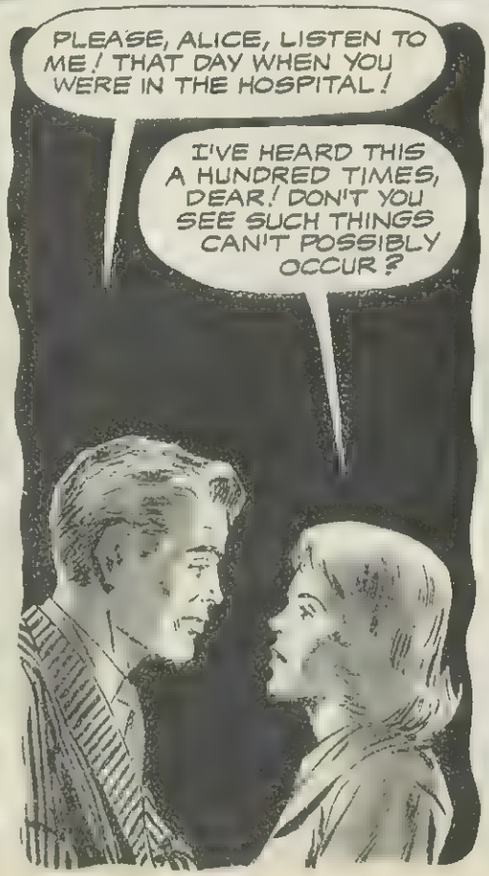
I'LL MAKE ANOTHER BARGAIN WITH YOU! PLEASE!
YOU'VE ENJOYED YOUR LIFE, YOU UNGRATEFUL CREATURE! NOW YOUR USEFULNESS IS OVER! MIDNIGHT OF NEW YEAR'S EVE, ARNO!

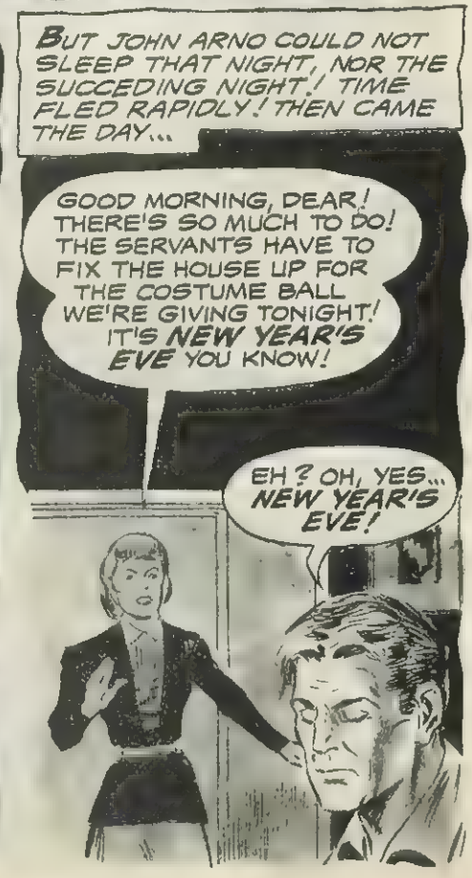
THREE MONTHS TO LIVE! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY OUT OF THIS! I'LL CALL EVERYONE TOGETHER... I'VE GOT TO TELL THEM!


NEXT MORNING...
BUT, DEAR! DO YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THIS... FANTASTIC TALE ABOUT CANDLES, AND DEATH, AND...
IT'S TRUE... FIND THAT CANDLE SHOP ... NO 'IFS' ANDS OR "BUTS"!


BUT THE MEN DIDN'T FIND THE SHOP! THEY ALSO DIDN'T SERIOUSLY BELIEVE ARNO!
NO TRACE OF THE SHOP... SORRY!
FALSE TRAIL, BOSS!
NOT ON THAT STREET, MR. ARNO!


THEY CAN'T FIND THE SHOP! IT'S NO USE, ALICE! I'M GOING TO DIE!
HUSH, DEAR! YOU'RE TALKING NONSENSE! YOU'RE TIRED YOU NEED REST!


PLEASE, ALICE, LISTEN TO ME! THAT DAY WHEN YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL!
I'VE HEARD THIS A HUNDRED TIMES, DEAR! DON'T YOU SEE SUCH THINGS CAN'T POSSIBLY OCCUR?

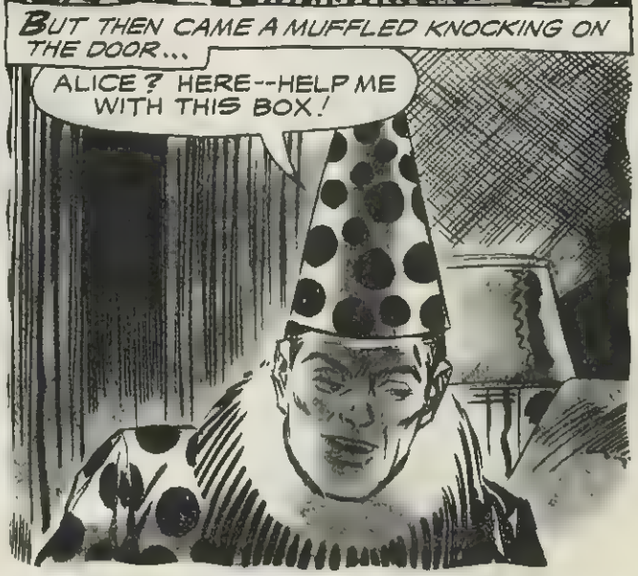

BUT JOHN ARNO COULD NOT SLEEP THAT NIGHT, NOR THE SUCCEDING NIGHT! TIME FLED RAPIDLY! THEN CAME THE DAY...
GOOD MORNING, DEAR! THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO! THE SERVANTS HAVE TO FIX THE HOUSE UP FOR THE COSTUME BALL WE'RE GIVING TONIGHT! IT'S NEW YEAR'S EVE YOU KNOW!
EH? OH, YES... NEW YEAR'S EVE!

THAT NIGHT...
LOOK, MY DEAH! THERE'S JOHN ARNO! DOESN'T HE LOOK SICK!
HE DOES LOOK A BIT SHAKY!

AS THE PARTY GREW WILDER AND MERRIER, JOHN BECAME MORE CONFIDENT...
COME ON, MR. ARNO--RELAX!
SHE'S RIGHT! MAYBE I'VE BEEN IMAGINING THESE THINGS!

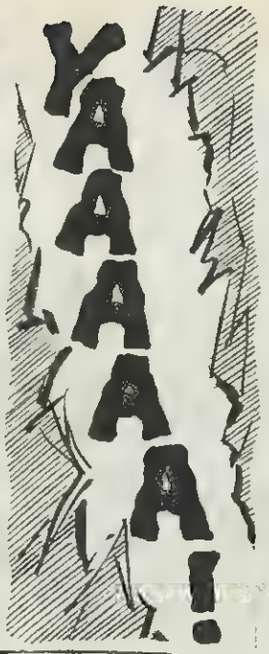
HEY--LET'S HAVE SOME FUN, EVERYBODY! I'VE GOT NOISEMAKERS IN THE LIBRARY! I'LL GO GET THEM! PASS OUT MORE REFRESHMENTS, ALICE!

YES SIR! WHY I FEEL GOOD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS!


BUT THEN CAME A MUFFLED KNOCKING ON THE DOOR...
ALICE? HERE--HELP ME WITH THIS BOX!

I AM ON TIME, AM I NOT? THE HOUR IS MIDNIGHT AND I HAVE COME FOR YOU!
HA HAW!
YOU! PLEASE DON'T GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE!

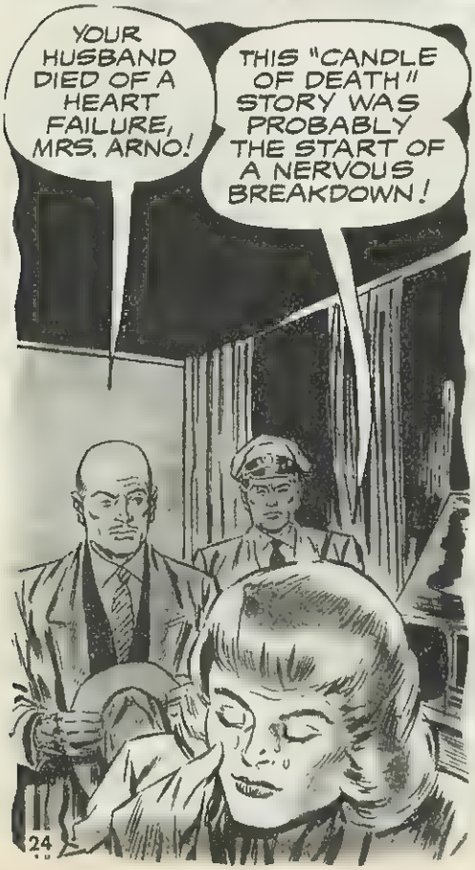
NO, NO! STAY AWAY! DON'T TOUCH ME!


YAAAAA!

WHAT WAS THAT?
THAT WAS JOHN'S VOICE! IT CAME FROM THE LIBRARY!

HE'S DEAD!
OH, JOHN, JOHN!
LOOK! THE CLOCK'S STOPPED AT MIDNIGHT!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE POLICE ARRIVED!
POOR JOHN! I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN BETTER CARE OF HIM! HE WASN'T WELL! TONIGHT HE LOOKED SO HAPPY!


YOUR HUSBAND DIED OF A HEART FAILURE, MRS. ARNO!
THIS "CANDLE OF DEATH" STORY WAS PROBABLY THE START OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!

JUST THEN, THE CORONER DISCOVERED SOMETHING!
INSPECTOR! I FOUND THIS CLENCHED IN THE CORPSE'S HAND!
WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A CANDLE... A SMALL, MELTED CANDLE THAT HAS FLICKERED OUT!
DID JOHN ARNO DIE OF A SUDDEN HEART ATTACK, OR DID HE KEEP A FINAL RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH INTO THE BEYOND?

The End

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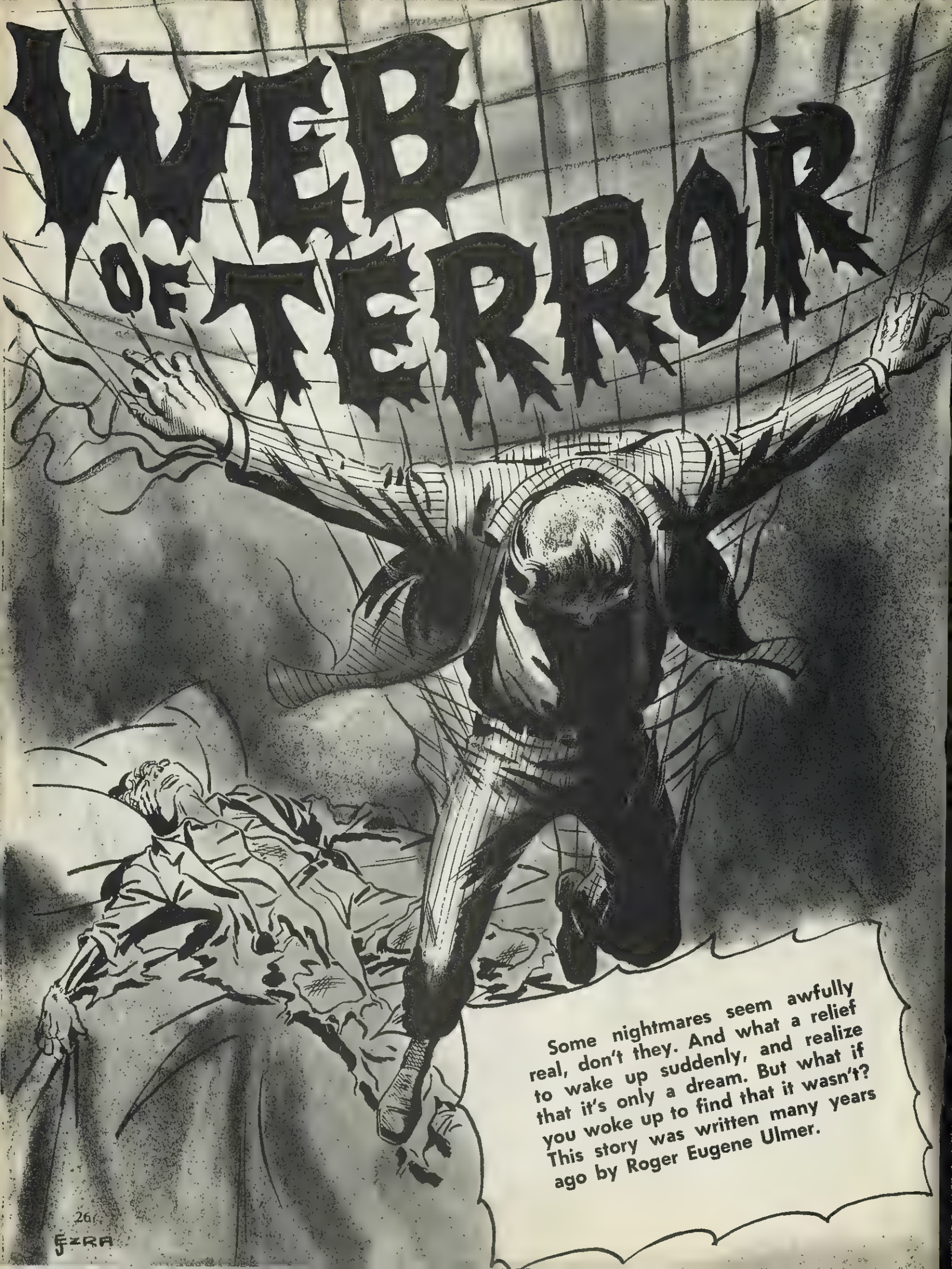

WEB OF TERROR
Some nightmares seem awfully real, don't they. And what a relief to wake up suddenly, and realize that it's only a dream. But what if you woke up to find that it wasn't? This story was written many years ago by Roger Eugene Ulmer.
EZRA

My name is David Pascal; profession, doctor of medicine. As a young man, I held an enviable reputation in my chosen field, and was credited with the virtues of ordinary respectability, a law-abiding nature, and abhorrence of the brutal. I was an average citizen.

At the time of which I write, I had a partner, Blenheim, by name, a man of singular personality, intelligence, capability, and, when I first met him, of most charming character. His countenance, however, filled me with a nameless fear and disgust. His features were bloated and leering. This I could well afford to forget, in view of his splendid capacities, and I prided myself upon affiliating with such a fellow; but it was not long before he developed into a most skillful criminal who involved me in a net of shady operations, conducted by him in my name and over my signature, of which I was wholly unaware and entirely innocent. I will not go into details, for they are of no significance, but suffice it to say, when I finally came to my senses I was forced into silence in order to save my name from utter ruin. Had I been wise, I would not have delayed the inevitable. Blenheim slowly absorbed my interests, and I became a figure-head; with each passing day I sank deeper into the mire, until in my own eyes I was a convicted criminal. More than once, I resolved to denounce him, but fear of the terrible cost always restrained me.

All this I might have suffered to the grave, but when Blenheim poisoned against me the mind of the girl I loved and had resolved to wed, and stole her affection, I rebelled. Grieved and desperate, I rushed upon him one day and publicly denounced him, while he stood by in smiling contempt, with Margaret clinging to his arm, regarding me in cold disdain.

In a few days, Blenheim brought forth incriminating documents and other evidence, signed by myself. The result was that I was tried, found guilty, and sent to prison for fraud. I came out broken in health, embittered, but determined to avenge myself by finding Blenheim, if he yet lived, and forcing him to public confession of his guilt and my innocence.

During my incarceration, Blenheim's face had obsessed me, waking and sleeping. I beheld his repellent features.

When again I saw Blenheim (he was easily found, as his name was widely spoken), he was established in luxurious quarters, surrounded by all material evidence of the respect and favor that had once been mine. Margaret, his wife, was now like a rose that had withered.

I forced my way past protesting clerks into Blenheim's private sanctum and stood silently in the doorway, watching him at his desk. He had not changed; still crafty, leering, as always, though his hair was slightly tinged with silver.

"Well?" he demanded curtly, swinging around and glancing up at me.

I approached him. "You don't know me, Blenheim?"

He peered earnestly into my eyes for a few seconds, and turn pale. "Pascal!"

"Yes," I echoed grimly. "Pascal."

Then I warned him, promised that I would have vengeance for the wrongs he had done me, that he had best enjoy his prosperity while he might, and left him, a somewhat shaken man; but his natural boldness soon restored him, I am sure.

That night, lost in visions and plans of revenge I retired, seeing as usual my old partner's leering face before me; but I could not sleep, and began to pace the floor in a state of great agitation. Tiring at length, I sank wearily into a chair, while my senses slowly slipped away from me; the room, I myself, seemed unreal, as if viewed from a distance by my detached self, and a queer mist obscured my mental faculties. I nodded sleepily, my eyes drooped heavily, and closed; and the only impression I carried into unconsciousness was a vivid, unforgettable one: the face of Louis Blenheim.

The chair seemed to have fallen silently away from me, and I hung suspended and alone in the silence, darkness and loneliness of infinity, the only living thing in that black void, supported by I know not what strange influence that prevented my crashing into bottomless depths; but, while waiting, I became conscious of a subtle presence, unseen, unheard but growing more tangible each moment, until the darkness in front of me was relieved by a ghostly, phosphorescent glow that emanated from a monstrous structure whose exact nature I could not determine.

Growing more distinct, it developed into a colossal web, octagonal in shape, the wings and fibers of which were lost in the all-enveloping gloom, and so vast that they seemed to fill the universal void. Its clinging, silken threads vibrated as if stirred softly to and fro by some agitation of the atmosphere, unfelt by me, fascinating yet filling my soul with terror. In the grip of the unnamable attraction toward the heart of the web, its filaments seemed hungry to receive me, and slowly, but irresistibly, I was pulled forward, struggling with all my bodily and mental powers; nothing availed, and as if impatient with my reluctance, the vast web began to glide toward me, growing more overwhelming the nearer it drew, until I felt as an ant before an elephant—utterly impotent, pitifully infinitesimal, at the mercy of overpowering force.

A sense of suffocation developed; my struggles were renewed, and I cried out; but my utterances sounded weak in that infinitude out of which had come this colossal fancy. Straight to its heart I was drawn, until the web loomed before me, vast, unfathomable, filled with invisible horrors and a fate I could not divine. In a breathless rush, while I cried and frantically fought its fascination, I hurtled through the intervening space and into the

web, which then, with every clinging fiber, began to close upon me, entwining my arms and legs, choking my cries, stealing my breath, paralyzing every muscle in my body.

I battled impotently against my doom. The soft, silken film clung tenaciously to my fingers; I was enveloped in a shroud of the gauzy stuff, until lips, eyes and nose were buried; it matted upon my hair and throttled my breath; but I was able still to see, though dimly, and realize what was occurring; and with mortal horror I beheld layer upon layer, sheet upon sheet of that endless web fold themselves about me remorselessly, silently, until I was helpless, unable to utter even the slightest sound. I wondered vaguely what would next occur, and why the demon of this mighty trap did not come running out upon its binding strands and with poisonous tentacles cover my body with its repulsive self, and bear me away to its hidden lair of dread.

At the thought I shivered anew and agony's perspiration trickled from my brow, for I was convinced that each succeeding instant would be my last, and breathing was accomplished with the greatest torture. I lay entirely blanketed in a shroud of gossamer fiber from which there was no escape; but still the dreaded monster did not appear, though my soul was alive to the ever-present fear of its advent. Was I to die thus, a prisoner in this fantastic trap of horror, slowly, with maddening torture?

A sudden rushing roar, beating against my muffled ears, answered the unspoken thought, and with a terrifying swoop, the entire monstrous web engulfed me. A feeble attempt to scream was choked in my throat; my struggles ceased as I succumbed and lay still.

Then, a new sensation; a vibration upon the strands, and looking up I beheld what I dreaded most—a monstrous spider, at least six feet long and three high, gliding swiftly over the network of his trap. A horrid creature with fat and bloated body covered with stiff black spines and legs long, powerful and patched over with a scrawny layer of black down. In places the glistening hide was exposed, and as the thing drew nearer I saw that it exuded a gummy fluid of pronounced sulfuric odor, covering the beast from head to foot and clinging to the fibers of the web in glittering globules. The head was huge, but more horrible because I perceived, with a thrill of revulsion that it was a human head.

The features of the countenance were almost livid in stark contrast to the jet of its body, and the face was that of Louis Blenheim, infinitely more repulsive than in life. Two long fangs hung from the drooling mouth, through which was shot the deadly venom of its bite, and the great eyes, protruding and yellow, glared on me.

The thing drew nearer, and I reeled from its stench, while its breath fanned my cheek hotly, the fangs glistening in its foul mouth, gaunt claws expanding and contracting like those of a cat, while the body seemed to pulsate and swell to twice its bloated size before my revolted gaze. The creature was upon me, covering my own with its vile bulk, crushing out my life and settling searching fangs in my flesh, but when the gleaming eyes came so close to mine, and I felt the sticky fluid oozing from the monster on to my own skin, I quivered under the cutting pain

of that bite, and revolted at the touch of the clammy brute. I renewed all my struggles with tenfold vigor.

Visions of being dragged away to the monster's abysmal den there to be feasted upon, flashed before me. The face was grinning, and with a superhuman effort, I dragged weighted hands from the mesh of gossamer and buried their fingers in the slimy body, shuddering; but my efforts were as the breaking of a ripple against a mighty sea-wall, and in the end I fell back panting, exhausted, and was carried swiftly over the web, to the den's opening.

There the spider paused to take firmer hold upon my body; but as it halted, I gazed into the black depths of the awful threshold before me and instantly trembled with unspeakable terror. My mind flew to the knife I always carried, and I prayed that I might grip the blade; suddenly, to my unspeakable joy, I beheld the weapon in my hand. Whence it came, I knew not. It was there, my one hope of deliverance. I wrenched an arm free from the momentarily relaxed grip of a talon and dragged the steel upward.

Swollen fingers gripped the hilt, and a leaden arm swung the knife. With a snakelike hiss, the monster turned and I felt again the sting of its foul fangs. Once, twice, thrice I struck, burying the steel in the hairy body. In those few anguished moments I lived through ages, blindly cutting, slashing, tearing madly, while with each fresh wound I inflicted, a spurt of the nauseating fluid would cover and almost strangle me; but I fought on and on. Agonized rage distorted the features of the man-spider, and my hate of Blenheim rose to superhuman heights.

Another bite of venomous fangs and I cried out, but continued to plunge my sticky and dripping knife into the bloated beast. With each incision of its teeth, I felt a rending pull within, leaving me weakened and gasping; but I battled to the last, covering the monster with ragged, gaping wounds. At last I sang with fierce triumph, for the deathwound had been inflicted, but how short-lived was my triumph! Of what avail the struggle of man in death's grip? I, too, was surrendering to the inevitable; but my failing arm made a final swoop and then annihilation.

My last impression was of Blenheim's face, with spider's body gloating over my dead form.

My dream ended abruptly, vividly, and I awoke to find the morning well advanced and daylight streaming in through my window. I leaped to my feet with a vast sigh of relief from that mental experience but determined to seek Blenheim and a settlement that very morning.

As I hurried from the house a newsboy's cry halted me. Some instinct I know not what, prompted me to purchase a paper. The next moment I was gazing spellbound at the flaring headlines:

Louis Blenheim Murdered

Following is an except from the account:

"... and Blenheim was found dead in bed early this morning after his family had heard cries of distress and sounds of a violent struggle in his room. The body was bleeding from numerous dagger wounds. No clue to the murderer has been found but there are several inexplicable circumstances surrounding the tragedy that color it with an element of the supernatural. The deceased was covered by a strange gummy fluid which exuded a pronounced sulfuric odor, while in another part of the room were found what appeared to be remnants of a great web, some of which were clinging to the body."

OUT OF THE SIGHT OF MAN CRAWLED A SLIMY, GIANT REPTILE... HUNTED... SHUNNED!!! ONCE ITS DARTING, FORKED TONGUE TASTED THE BLOOD OF A HUMAN BEING, THE PUTRID, DEADLY VENOM FLOWED.
THE SLIMY SNAKEMAN
YAAAAAAEEEEEEE
...AND HERE HE IS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN SERPENTINE! THE WORLD'S GREATEST PHENOMENON! HE HISSES... HE CRAWLS... HE HAS SCALES OF A SNAKE, BUT HE WAS BORN OF HUMAN PARENTS!
GOSH!
GEE!
I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO SEND HIM DOWN ON THE BUS ALONE! HAVE THE DRIVER LOOK AFTER HIM!
YEAH! I'LL PUT A TAG ON HIM TOO! DON'T KNOW WHY THEY'D WANT HIM AT THE FUNERAL! HE CAN HARDLY TALK!

THE MIND OF THE SNAKE-MAN IS CONFUSED AT THE THE THOUGHT OF ENTERING THE OUTSIDE WORLD...
SERPENTINE, THIS MIGHT NOT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU, BUT WHEN YOUR MOTHER DIED, HER LAST WISH WAS FOR YOU TO BE AT HER FUNERAL!
YEAH! NOW HERE'S OUR NEXT STOP! KEEP IT WITH YOU AND GET ON THE RIGHT BUS! YOU'RE OUR BEST ATTRACTION AND WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU!
HISS!
PROPERTY OF BALENTINE CIRCUS
CONFUSION TURNS TO FEAR AS INSTINCT TELLS HIM THAT THE PASSENGERS CRINGE AT THE SIGHT OF HIS GHASTLY, SNAKE-LIKE BODY...
SANTA BARBARA! THIRTY MINUTE DINNER STOP! YOU COME WITH ME, SERPENTINE!
RESTAR
WHY DO THEY HATE ME? I DON'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE...
GIVE HIM A HAM SANDWICH AND A MALT! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
OH, ALL RIGHT IF YOU SAY SO!
SHE CAN'T STAND TO LOOK AT ME! I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE CIRCUS!
WHAT'S HE SUPPOSED TO BE? UBI, THE BIRD BRAIN?
NAW... HE'S SERPENTINE, THE HUMAN REPTILE! WE DON'T LIKE YOU ON THE BUS WITH US!
LIKE A CORNERED BEAST, THE SNAKE-MAN FEELS INFERIOR AND SOMETHING WITHIN HIM SAYS RUN... RUN... RUN!!
CRAWL OUT OF HERE, SNAKEMAN!
LEAVE THE GUY ALONE!
HISS!
HEY! WHAT'S THE MATTER? COME BACK! NOW YOU'VE DONE IT!
THAT GUY SHOULDN'T BE LET AROUND LOOSE!

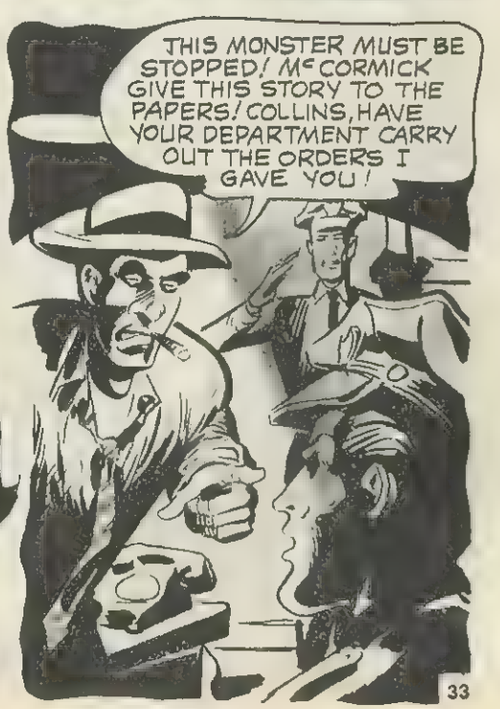
FEAR AND CONFUSION BESET HIM! USED TO BEING CARED FOR, HE IS LOST AND HELPLESS...
WHERE CAN I GO? WHO WOULD WANT ME?
...BUT SOON THE BALANCE BETWEEN MAN AND BEAST BEGINS TO SWAY! SERPENTINE'S EYE HAS POWER TO HOLD IN ITS SPELL THE CREATURES OF THE FOREST...
FOOD... FOOD... I MUST EAT!
...AND ALREADY THE WARM BLOOD HAS TURNED COLD... COLD AS HIS CHANGING FEELING TOWARD HUMANITY, THE HORRID VENOM NOW OOZES FROM HIS FANGS LONG AND SHARP!
THE MIND, TOO, GROWS SHARP WITH ALL THE CUNNING OF A SERPENT, AND LIKE A GHOUL UPON A ROTTING CORPSE, THE MORE VIPER-THAN-MAN CREEPS FROM OUT HIS HIDING AND STALKS IN THE NIGHT...
JIM! I HEARD SOMETHING! IN... IN THE YARD!
THE ANIMALS HAVE BEEN ACTING UP ALL DAY! I'LL TAKE A LOOK PROBABLY A FOX!
ARF ARF
HEY! YOU STOP OR I'LL SHOOT!
GOOD LORD! WHAT IS THAT?
B

KILL
KILL
MAN
HISSSSSS
NOW IN THAT SMALL MIND GROWS A NEW EMOTION... HATRED! HATRED FOR MAN WHO HAS MADE HIM A SLIMY CRAWLING FUGITIVE! AND HIS EVIL HEART POUNDING LIKE GHASTLY CANNIBAL DRUMS, THROBS OUT THE SINGLE THEME... KILL!
HELP ME!
HUMAN BLOOD IT'S SWEET TO MY TONGUE!
HISSSS!

ARMED ONLY WITH THE GRUESOME FANGS WHICH DRIP DEADLY VENOM THE FIEND FORGETS HIS FEAR AND LEAVES THE PROTECTIVE FOREST...
HISSS!

NOW THAT THE MONSTER HAS TASTED THE WARM, SWEET BLOOD, HE BECOMES A CANNIBAL! THIRSTING FOR MORE, MORE... MORE! AND THIS LUST FOR BLOOD AND VENGEANCE CARRIES HIM TO EVERY CORNER OF THE CITY...
HISSSSS
ARRR

LOCK OUT! MARY! RUN! KIDS RUN!
HISSSS!


THIS MONSTER MUST BE STOPPED! McCORMICK GIVE THIS STORY TO THE PAPERS! COLLINS, HAVE YOUR DEPARTMENT CARRY OUT THE ORDERS I GAVE YOU!

LLETIN
SNAKE-MAN BELIEVED HEADING SOUTH; CORDON STRETCHED OVER ALL AREAS
Police everywhere alerted
ALL ASKED TO COOPERATE BY REMAINING LOCKED IN HOUSES

SURROUNDED, SERPENTINE SLITHERS THRU WOODS, INTO TREES EAGER TO KILL, TO AVENGE, TO SINK DEADLY FANGS INTO MEN...
IF WE GET HIM, IT'LL MEAN A PROMOTION! BUT WHAT A WAY TO GET STRIPES!
YOU STAY HERE! I'LL CHECK FARTHER DOWN

HISSSSS
KEEP MOVING... GOT TO KEEP MOVING...
LIKE A MAGNET EXERTING ITS POWER OVER HIM, THE GRUESOME HUMAN-SNAKE WAS DRAWN ON...

THE HOMING INSTINCT, STRONG WITHIN HIM, HAS LURED HIM BACK, SEEKING THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF HIS OLD HOME...
CANCLED
THEY'LL HIDE ME... THEY'LL PROTECT ME!

IT... IT'S HIM! HE'S COME TO GET US... HELP!

SHUNNED! SCORNED, THE MONSTER'S HATRED INCREASES...
THEY'RE BOTH DEAD! HE MUST BE AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE! LET THE DOGS LOOSE! WE'LL TRACK HIM DOWN!

NOW HIS INSTINCT LED HIM TO THE FETID HOME OF BROTHER MONSTERS!
REPTILE HOUSE

The GHASTLY CONCLAVE MET TO WREAK HAVOC ON THE MORTAL ENEMY... MAN...
MY BROTHERS... LET US GO AND AVENGE OURSELVES ON THOSE WHO KEEP US DOWNTRODDEN!
TO GIANT KING BOA CONSTRICTOR OLDEST AND LARGEST SNAKE IN CAPTIVITY
HISSSS

AH... YOU ARE A BEAUTY! I'LL HAVE YOU OUT IN A MINUTE!

WE NEED YOUR STRENGTH IN OUR FIGHT! YOU ARE FREE! JOIN US!
GRASH
HISSSS

QUICK, NOW! THE DOGS ARE HEADED FOR THE REPTILE HOUSE!
ARF
OWWOOOOO
ARF
ARF
ARF

BUT THE BOA MISTAKES THE BROTHERLY GESTURE OF THE SNAKE-MAN...
HE'S ATTACKING ?
The TWO LOCKED IN DEADLY COMBAT...THE POISON FANGS AGAINST THE RIPPLING MUSCLES...
WHY DOESN'T HE DIE? I-I CAN'T STAND MUCH MORE!
OH, GOD! ALL THE FIENDS OF HELL ARE LOOSE!
WE'LL HAVE TO GET THE SNAKES FIRST! GET THE SACK, READY!
HISSS
GOOD LORD!
OH, NO! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE! HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT POISONOUS AND NON-POISONOUS SNAKES ARE DEADLY ENEMIES, AND THAT NON-POISONOUS SNAKES ARE IMMUNE TO VENOM!
THE END

WITCHES' NIGHTMARE

A GATHERING OF WITCHES IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT ARE COOKING UP A LITTLE BREW... A PINCH OF JEALOUSY FLAVORED WITH INTRIGUE THEN STIRRED WELL AND THE RESULT IS **MURDER!**

Reynoso 69

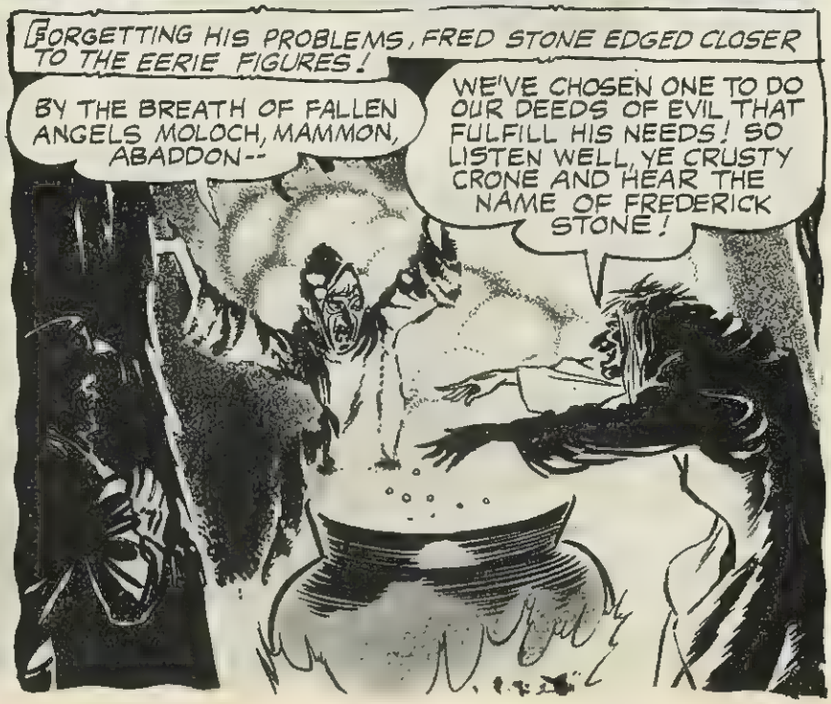
THE AFFAIR HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR MANY MONTHS ...FRED STONE HAD TAKEN ALL HE COULD...IT WAS NOW TIME FOR ACTION...
CAN'T THINK HERE... GOT TO GET OUT INTO THE COUNTRY!

THEY'VE GOT TO DIE... BOTH OF THEM! BUT HOW... HOW?

I'VE GOT TO FIGURE A WAY WITHOUT INCRIMINATING MYSELF... THERE MUST BE A WAY!

IT MUST BE THE PERFECT CRIME! I'VE GOT TO KILL THEM AND STILL NOT GET CAUGHT!... WHA-- WHAT'S THAT?!!

IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE! IT WAS FANTASTIC! BUT IT WAS TRUE...
WITCHES!


FORGETTING HIS PROBLEMS, FRED STONE EDGED CLOSER TO THE EERIE FIGURES!
BY THE BREATH OF FALLEN ANGELS MOLOCH, MAMMON, ABADDON--
WE'VE CHOSEN ONE TO DO OUR DEEDS OF EVIL THAT FULFILL HIS NEEDS! SO LISTEN WELL, YE CRUSTY CRONE AND HEAR THE NAME OF FREDERICK STONE!

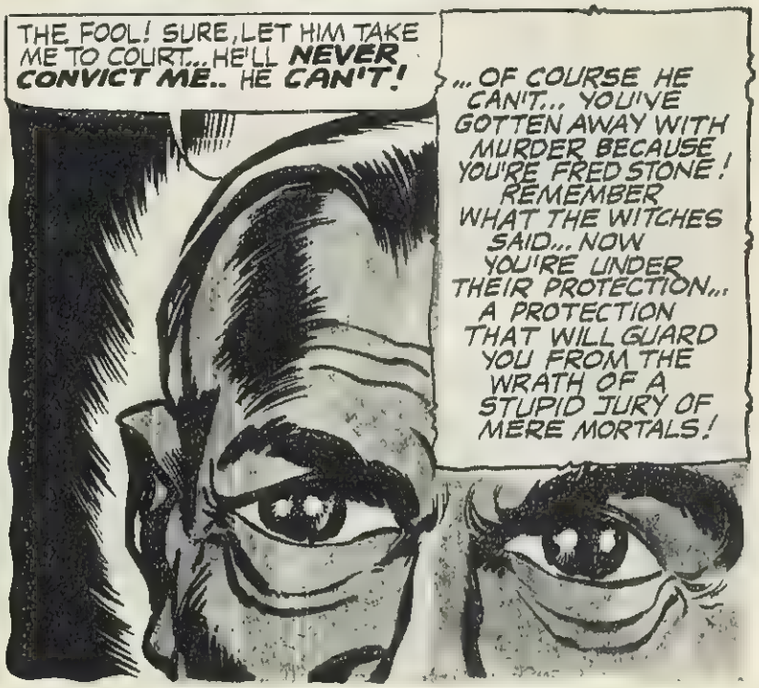
AND SO THE STAGE WAS SET... THE PLAN THOUGHT OUT LONG AGO... NOW TO PUT IT INTO ACTION...

THE DEED WAS DONE! AND FRED STONE WAS SAFE! WHY SHOULDN'T HE BE? DIDN'T HE HAVE THE GUARANTEE OF THE WITCHES? NOW ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS RETURN HOME AND SAY THE TRIP HAD BEEN CALLED OFF... THEN JUST SIT BACK... AND WAIT!

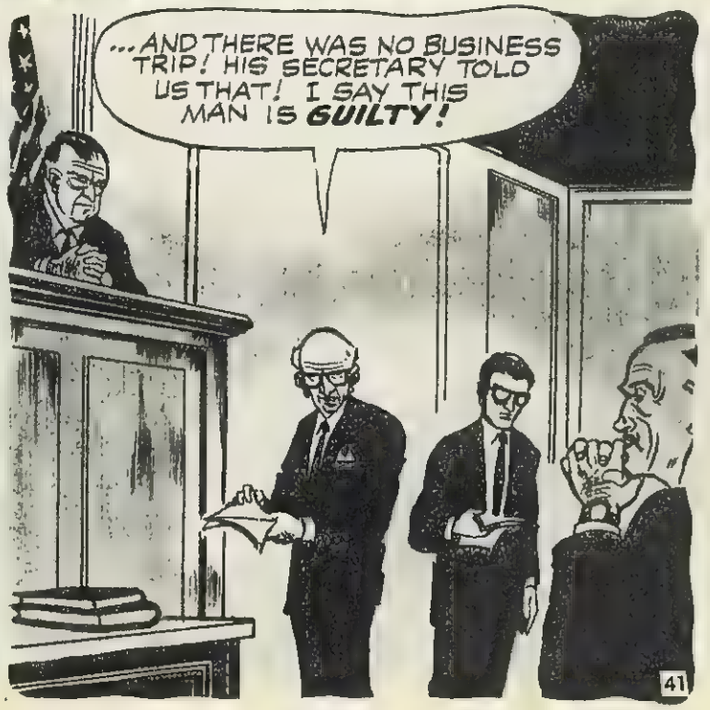
I'VE JUST COME FROM YOU'RE WIFE... SHE'S DEAD!
DEAD! SHE CAN'T BE! SHE'S IN BOSTON... VISITING HER MOTHER!

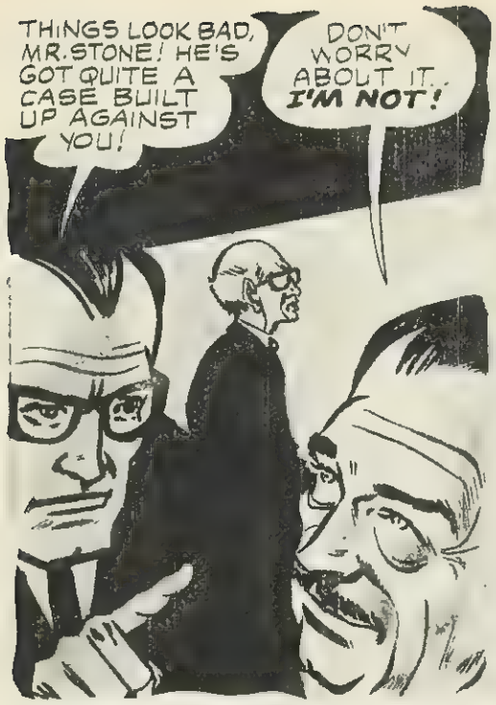
CUT THE ACTING, STONE! YOU KNOW WHERE WE FOUND THE BODIES... BECAUSE YOU KILLED THEM!
KILLED THEM? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG MAN!

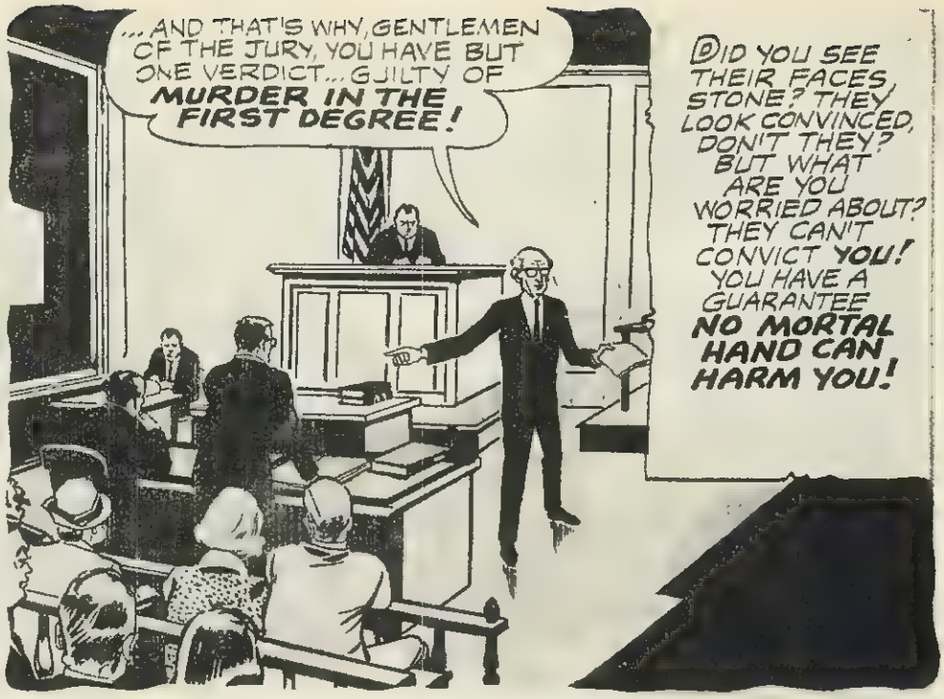
NO, I HAVEN'T! I KNOW YOU DID IT AND I CAN PROVE IT! AND I WILL... IN COURT!

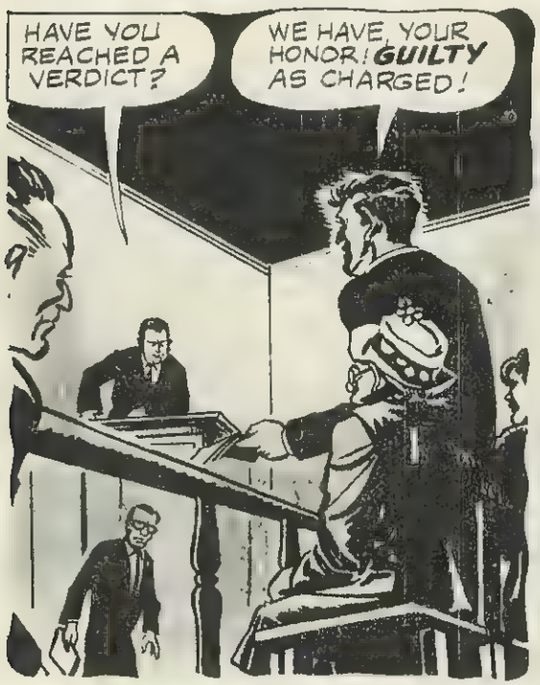

THE FOOL! SURE, LET HIM TAKE ME TO COURT... HE'LL NEVER CONVICT ME.. HE CAN'T!
...OF COURSE HE CAN'T... YOU'VE GOTTEN AWAY WITH MURDER BECAUSE YOU'RE FRED STONE! REMEMBER WHAT THE WITCHES SAID... NOW YOU'RE UNDER THEIR PROTECTION... A PROTECTION THAT WILL GUARD YOU FROM THE WRATH OF A STUPID JURY OF MERE MORTALS!

THE CASE CAME UP QUICKLY... MAYBE TOO QUICKLY...
YOU HAVE MY STATEMENT, GENTLEMEN!... I AM INNOCENT!


...AND THERE WAS NO BUSINESS TRIP! HIS SECRETARY TOLD US THAT! I SAY THIS MAN IS GUILTY!







BUBBLE, BUBBLE--TOIL AND TROUBLE... HEH! HEH! THEY SAID NO MORTAL HAND COULD HARM HIM... BUT THESE WERE NOT MORTALS... NOW POOR FRED HAS NAUGHT TO FEAR... BUT MORTAL FEAR ITSELF! HEH! HEH!

THE END!

YOU'RE AN **ELDERLY** AND ECCENTRIC...A RECLUSE...BUT YOU'VE GOT **MONEY**, AND WHAT'S MORE YOU'VE GOT A **YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL WIFE!** AND THAT'S ALL YOU WANT IN THIS SWAMP WILDERNESS, BUT HUBERT KRANZ...YOU'RE IN FOR A...

NIGHT OF TERROR

BUT WHEN JED, YOUR CARETAKER WALKS INTO THE HOUSE YOU SEE WHY YOU MUST BELIEVE IT! HE'S YOUNG... YOU'RE OLD! HE'S DESIRABLE... YOU'RE UGLY! JUST THE THREE OF YOU HERE... ALL ALONE IN THIS SWAMP---AND NOW YOUR HEARING'S GONE!!
DOROTHY KISSES YOU... SHE'S TRYING TO TELL YOU SHE'S SORRY AND YOUR HEART MELTS AT HER TOUCH...
SHE MUST HAVE LOVED YOU TO MARRY YOU! YOU TELL YOURSELF IT WASN'T FOR YOUR MONEY, BUT FOR YOU! IT HAD TO BE AN ACCIDENT! SO YOU FORGET ABOUT IT! WHEN DINNER IS SERVED YOU ALWAYS FORGET ABOUT UNPLEASANT THINGS...
PERHAPS YOU HAVE BEEN TOO HARD ON THE POOR DEAR THING! YOU'LL MAKE IT UP TO HER AS SOON AS YOU FINISH YOUR MEAL...
BUT...
THAT ODOR WAS TOO UNMISTAKABLE TO MISS! THAT TASTE WAS TOO HORRIBLE TO IGNORE! YOU ALL DASH INTO THE KITCHEN! ...
--RAT POISON! THE CAT SPILLED IT INTO THE SOUP-KETTLE!

IT'S FUNNY! HA, HA... VERY FUNNY! ONLY JED AND DOROTHY DIDN'T EAT THEIR SOUP! YES... FUNNY THAT RAT POISON SHOULD BE RESTING OVER A SOUP-KETTLE! FUNNY, AND SOMETHING ELSE!

BUT YOU PUSH THAT OTHER THOUGHT OUT OF YOUR MIND, AS SHE KISSES YOU, YOU'RE TIRED AND YOU'D LIKE TO REST... DOROTHY CLEARS THE TABLE AND DECIDES TO READ BEFORE RETIRING! JED RETIRES TO HIS OWN QUARTERS...

BUT THAT NASTY THOUGHT MADE YOU TURN AROUND! YOU WISH YOU NEVER DID!

WELL-- NOW YOU KNOW! BOTH OF THEM ARE TO BLAME! BOTH OF THEM HAVE BETRAYED YOU! THEY'RE PLANNING TO KILL YOU! YES... ADMIT IT... ADMIT IT!

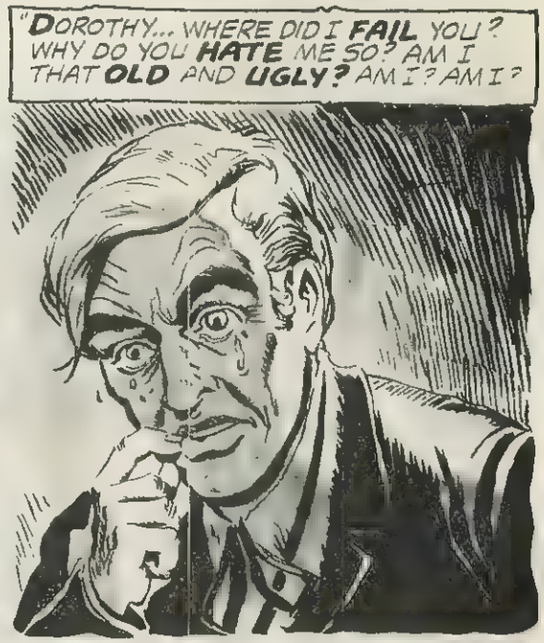
YOU FALL ASLEEP WITH THEIR TAUNTING LAUGHTER STILL INSIDE YOUR HEAD! THAT NEXT MORNING, YOU DECIDE TO SPEAK TO DOROTHY--TO ASK HER WHAT WENT WRONG BETWEEN YOU... YOU SEE HER OUTSIDE-- IN THE GARDEN...

BUT, AS YOU PASS BENEATH THE MANSION ROOF, YOU LOOK UP...

THEY COME RUNNING TO YOU--OH, SO CONCERNED: LOOK AT THEM--LOOK AT THEIR ANXIOUS FACES...

YOU WANT TO CHOKE THEM BOTH, BUT YOU CONTROL YOURSELF AND EVEN AS YOU TURN YOUR BACK TO GO INSIDE YOU THINK YOU SEE THEM SMILE...

TWICE THEY'VE FAILED! THE THIRD TIME THEY MIGHT SUCCEED! YOU KNOW YOU COULD KILL JED WITH YOUR FISTS, BUT YOU CAN'T BEAT A GUN! THOSE ARE YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU WATCH HIM ROW AWAY TO TOWN...


"DOROTHY... WHERE DID I FAIL YOU? WHY DO YOU HATE ME SO? AM I THAT OLD AND UGLY? AM I? AM I?

THE HOURS DRAG BY AND YOU LOCK YOURSELF IN YOUR ROOM! BUT FROM YOUR WINDOW THAT NIGHT YOU'VE SEEN SOMEONE APPROACH.. SOMEONE WITH A PACKAGE UNDER HIS ARM..

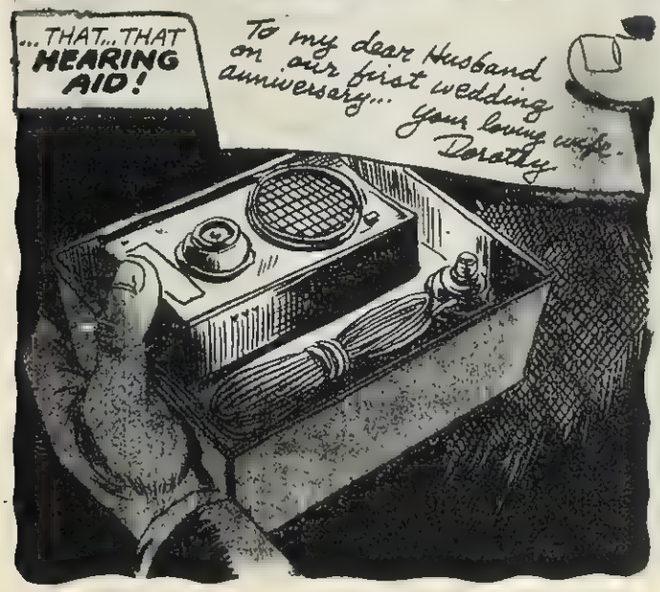
YES... IT'S JED! AND HE'S GOT THE GUN! YOU SNEAK DOWNSTAIRS, AND THEY DON'T NOTICE YOU AT ALL...

...AND YOU PICK UP THAT HEAVY POKER...

...AND YOU CREEP UP RIGHT BEHIND THEM...

--AND YOU BEAR DOWN WITH IT HARD--VERY HARD--VERY, VERY HARD--

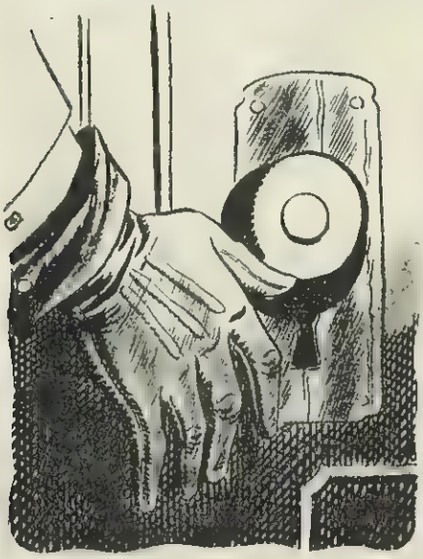
---AND YOU TEAR AT THE PACKAGE, GLOATING--- PLANNING TO HURL IT INTO THE SWAMP ONCE YOU'VE SEEN IT...ONCE YOU'VE SEEN THAT---

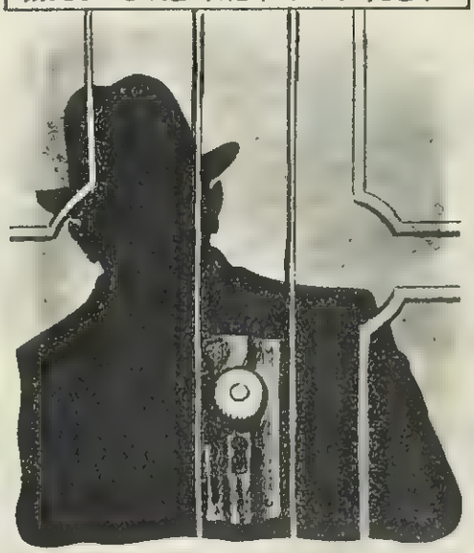

...THAT...THAT HEARING AID!
To my dear Husband on our first wedding anniversary... Your loving wife Dorothy

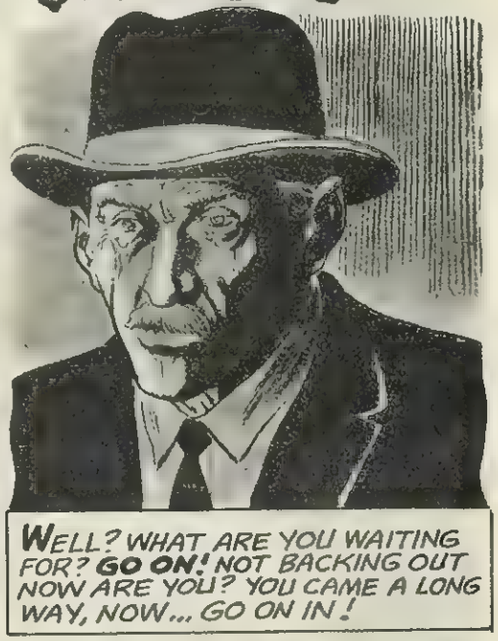
I GUESS YOU WERE WRONG, HUBERT KRANZ!
THE END

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT... ANY CLERK WILL TELL YOU THAT, BUT YOU MUST REMEMBER...

SATAN'S CAT







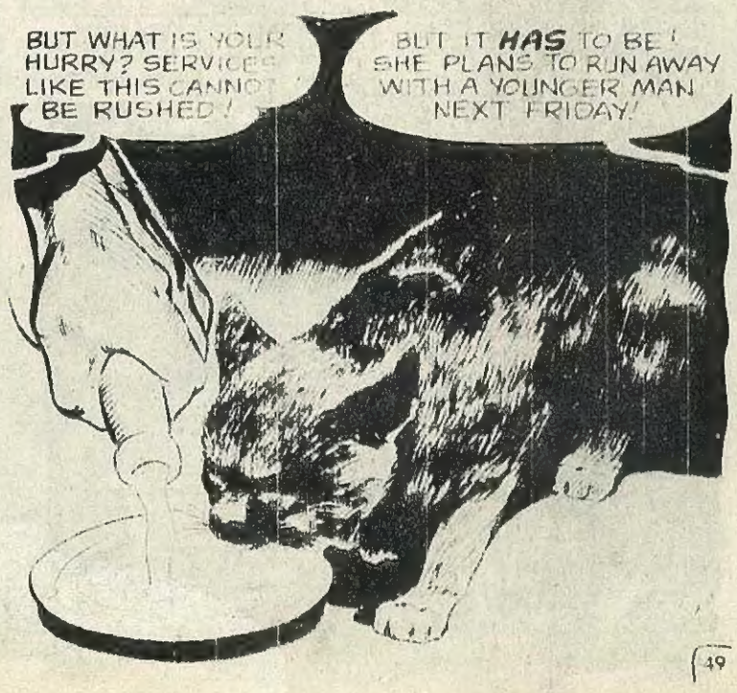
ENTER, MONSIEUR! YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR ME, EH?
TRUE, BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?

I KNOW MANY THINGS.. NOW HOW CAN I SERVE YOU
WELL, ER

CAN I TALK HERE?
CERTAINLY! DIABLO WILL NOT TELL YOUR SECRET!

I WANT YOU TO MURDER MY WIFE!

MURDER IS SUCH A HORRIBLE WORD, MONSIER... LET'S SAY... DO AWAY WITH!
CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL... BUT IT MUST BE SOON!


BUT WHAT IS YOUR HURRY? SERVICES LIKE THIS CANNOT BE RUSHED!
BUT IT HAS TO BE! SHE PLANS TO RUN AWAY WITH A YOUNGER MAN NEXT FRIDAY!

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

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City.....Zone.....State.....

CERTAINLY! IT SEEMS LIKE A FAIRLY SIMPLE JOB! THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY COMPLICATIONS!
GOOD! WELL, THEN, HERE'S YOUR MONEY!

THANK YOU, SIR... THANK YOU! NOW, REMEMBER... DON'T EVER CONTACT ME AGAIN... UNLESS OF COURSE YOU SHOULD EVER FIND NEED OF MY SERVICES!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT... I'M GOING ABROAD VERY SHORTLY!

HAVE A NICE TRIP, SIR... AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING-- I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING BY FRIDAY!
ALL RIGHT, THEN! BUT I WISH YOU COULD DO THIS SERVICE FIRST! OH, WELL, I GUESS YOU KNOW YOUR BUSINESS BEST!

THE IMPATIENCE OF SOME PEOPLE, EH, DIABLO? COME... LET US PREPARE FOR THE OTHER ASSIGNMENT!

THIS WILL BE SIMPLER THAN I IMAGINED... ELDERLY MAN... SLIGHT SCAR ON FORHEAD... WEARS SPATS... LIKES LICORICE... WIFE WANTS TO DO AWAY WITH HIM!

IF HE ONLY KNEW... BUT THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT... ONLY-- FIRST COME FIRST SERVED! HEH... HEH... HEH!
THE END